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THE NEW
STATESMAN
AND NATION
The Week-end Review

Vol. XXX. No. 765. [Incorporating THE ATHENÆUM] SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1945 [Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper] SIXPENCE

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THE TARGET AND THE TRACK

CONCEDE, as all will, that the electorate presented Mr. Attlee's administration with the most arduous task which ever confronted a British Government: the question remains whether the Ministry is handling its job in a way that minimises its difficulties. In the Coalition Government, Mr. Churchill allocated to himself responsibility for all major decisions. This had the advantage of giving homogeneity to policy, and the disadvantage—notably on the Home front—of continually holding up action through the necessity of referring questions to the Prime Minister. To-day a different system of government is in operation; Ministers form a team, albeit one which includes several strong and sometimes discordant personalities, working under an acceptable and tactful chairman. Nevertheless, there is still a bottle-neck in the Cabinet's overcrowded agenda; and in the absence of clear, quick decisions on general policy, actions taken by Departments are apt to be incompatible. Alternatively, no action is taken, and in its default, fresh problems are created.

A few instances will suffice to illustrate our meaning. Mobilising his Working Parties of investigators and planners, Sir Stafford Cripps is pursuing energetically his aim of promoting industrial efficiency and increased exports. Simultaneously, under pressure from the War Office, Mr. Isaacs is impeding industrial reconversion by calling up automobile draughtsmen, tool-makers, and other skilled personnel under inflexible military service schedules, and is seriously complicating Miss Wilkinson's task at the Ministry of Education by conscripting school teachers. In this matter of man-power a similar tussle is going on between the Service Ministries and Mr. Bevan. His difficulties, in turn, in framing a clear-cut State Medical Service are being increased by the fact that the Cabinet has not so far said definitely what the doctors' future status is to be. In default of this, demobilised doctors are purchasing practices and the wartime Emergency Medical Service is withering away. So, too, are our Information Services. While the Cabinet has still apparently not yet reached on its agenda the item dealing with the future of the Ministry of Information and the B.B.C.'s European Division, their experienced personnel are quietly liquidating themselves. Again, in transport policy, Mr. Ernest Davies, M.P., points out in our columns this week the dangers of allowing the disintegration of wartime machinery which could smooth the path to nationalisation. Finally, there is the Government's silence on wage policy. Why court the outbreak of sporadic strikes, like that in the docks, through the absence of a carefully explained policy covering prices and wages?

To some extent matters might be improved by a re-allocation of portfolios and responsibilities within the administration. It is doubtful whether even a Minister as able and energetic as Aneurin Bevan can adequately cope with the dual task of housing and health policy. Again, should Ernest Bevin, with all his engrossing preoccupations at the Foreign Office, still act as Chairman of the Man-Power Board? There is perhaps need, too, for greater delegation of responsibility to Departmental Ministers, leaving an inner Cabinet more time to concentrate on a few priorities in the realm of general policy. But when this is said, it remains true that the fundamental difficulty in which the Government is involved is inherent in gradualist Social Democracy. Since it does not contemplate revolutionary economic changes, it has to combine two treatments, injecting a small dose of Socialism, while at the same time prescribing a general tonic for Capitalism. It has to deal, by a blend of continuity, compromise and experiment, with an immense tangle of vested interests.

Some of the results we have already listed. Others are visible in the attempt to design for a nationalised Bank of England financial architecture which will not unduly alarm the City, and in the reluctance displayed by the Minister of Health in his speech in Parliament on Wednesday, to tread on the corns of the entrenched Local Authorities. We do not imply that a gradualist approach to Socialism is unworkable. What we do suggest is that the process is likely to be painfully slow, and to involve frictions and contradictions which will test severely the patience of the Government's supporters. One point especially we would urge on the Government. They stand to lose much more by forfeiting the confidence of their friends than by arousing opposition from their enemies. The pace of Socialist legislation in a parliamentary democracy may have to be circumscribed; but there is no reason why the dog should not be shown the rabbit, why the ultimate target—and the track to it—should not continually be made plain to the nation. Let it be made clear beyond possibilities of misunderstanding that the objective is a Socialist State, and that all intermediate action is being taken, and should be judged, from that standpoint.

Housing Strategy

Mr. Bevan had little difficulty on Wednesday in showing that the "grave apprehension" felt by the Opposition at the housing situation was a logical result of past bungling by Tory Ministers. The White Paper issued on the eve of the Debate had revealed that only 4,152 temporary houses had so far been erected out of the 500,000 talked of by Mr. Churchill in March, 1944; and that costs had far exceeded original estimates. Outlining his own plans, Mr. Bevan (rightly declining to give target figures for "permanent" output in the near future) confirmed his intention to concentrate building resources on the construction of working-class houses to let. The Local Authorities (with added powers for quick acquisition of land) are to be his main agents, and licences for private building are to be sparingly issued and confined to houses costing, at most, £1,300 in London and £1,200 elsewhere. As an alleviation of this winter's acute shortage, Mr. Bevan is relying on the encouragement of some "conversion" of existing large dwelling and on voluntary sub-letting of redundant rooms. The main gaps in his statement were his inability to assure the House that adequate man-power would be forthcoming; his failure to indicate how he proposes to "break" inflated prices of materials and components; and the absence of any promise that ampler and cheaper funds will be placed at the Local Authorities' disposal. In the case of components, State factories are merely to "supplement" commercial production; and Mr. Bevan suggested, almost incidentally, that "other agencies" might in the last resort have to be invoked by his Ministry if the Local Authorities proved unequal to their task.

Old Age Pensions

The Government's refusal to fulfil the hopes of an interim dividend this winter of Beveridge benefits for Old Age Pensioners has led to a Back Bench revolt which the Cabinet should not ignore: over 160 Labour M.P.s have pledged themselves to support a motion by Mr. Silverman calling for an immediate increase of the basic weekly pension by 7*s*. 6*d*. for single people and by 12*s*. 6*d*. for married couples. Mr. Griffiths' exposition of the Government's case was singularly unconvincing. He promised that the Beveridge Bill (to be introduced early next year) would contain a provision giving effect to an improvement in pension rates at a date earlier than the coming into force of the general insurance scheme; but, he argued, the introduction of an interim measure dealing with pensioners would simply delay the passage of the comprehensive insurance legislation. Since all that is required to raise forthwith the basic rate of pension is a one-clause Measure, this argument is difficult to accept. According to Mr. Griffiths, pensioners now number about four millions. Of these, 2,400,000 are receiving the basic rate, and 1,600,000 are drawing supplementary pensions, assessed in case of need and paid by the Assistance Board. An increase in the basic rate would, of course, necessitate a review of every supplementary pension; and we suspect that the real reason for the Government's decision to postpone action in the case of basic rates is that they have accepted the Departmental view of the Ministry of Pensions that the reviewing of supplementaries would be administratively beyond the capacity of the Department's existing personnel. This might affect the speed of re-assessment, but ought not to postpone the decision. Where there is a policy will, an administrative way can generally be found.

How Big an Air Force?

Dissatisfaction in the R.A.F. at the projected deceleration in the rate of release during the first half of 1946 is eloquently reflected in our postbag. In the January–June period next year, the weekly rate of release of R.A.F. personnel is to be 5,000, as compared with 8,000 from the Navy, and 42,000 from the Army. By June 30th, 1946, the VE-day strength of the R.A.F. will have been reduced only to 58 per cent., as compared with an Army reduction to 36 per cent., and a Navy reduction to 52 per cent. When this disparity in the rate of demobilisation as between the Services was first disclosed, we supposed that the reason for the maintenance of air strength at such a high figure was the R.A.F.'s transportation commitments. In his statement, however, to the House of Commons last week, Mr. Strachey explained that there was another relevant factor: the Cabinet had accepted the argument of the Chiefs of Staff that, in view of our strategical needs, the Army could not safely be reduced by next June to the level desired by the Government in the interests of "industrial redeployment" at home, unless a powerful Air Force were kept in being. From a strictly military standpoint, the Chiefs of Staff can no doubt make out a case; as a striking force, the R.A.F. is obviously more economical in man-power than the Army. But on what conception of British foreign policy is this estimate of the size of the required striking force based? And can this country afford to lock up in the Air Force anything like as much man-power and resources as the Air Ministry appears to be demanding? Set aside the fact that the Ministry is clinging to hundreds of air fields urgently needed for civilian purposes; allowing for new intake of recruits during the next eight months, the strength of the R.A.F. next June will exceed 600,000. Added to the minimum probable post-war strength of Navy and Army, we regard this figure as economically far beyond Britain's capacity.

Atomic Inaction

While scientists here and in the United States, are denouncing atomic "secrecy," the world waits vainly for Mr. Truman to begin his promised discussions with Britain and Canada on what should be done, or to initiate any plan of control by the World Security Council. It also waits in vain, so far, for any declaration of policy by Mr. Attlee. What, for instance, are we going to do about it at home? Congress already has before it the Bill which (*a*) authorises the expropriation of all sources of uranium on American territory and—a disturbing detail—the purchase of deposits of it abroad, and (*b*) appropriates all patents and provides for the authoritative organisation of research. Can we wait much longer for comparable legislation? Two dangers in particular have to be met. One, which may lie some time ahead, is that vested interests may patent some of the processes required for the industrial use of the atom, and exploit them, or, in the alternative, sterilise them. The more imminent risk is that Great Powers may buy up the deposits of these rare elements in outlying parts of the earth. A scramble for these unstable heavy minerals might begin, as perilous for the world's peace as the struggle for oil. The first obvious precaution is by agreement with the Dominions, India and the Colonies to establish all over the Commonwealth the prior claim of the Crown to all such deposits. We urge this with no nationalistic ambitions in mind. Atomic energy, in peace as in war, should be regulated and distributed by the United Nations, for the common good of mankind. But before this can be done, we must make sure that research and raw materials are both under public control.

Realism and Austria

Recognition of the Renner Government now seems likely to be accorded by the Western Powers without more ado. The U.S. State Department having announced that it is ready to take this step, the British Government is virtually bound to follow suit. But though acceptance by all the Powers of the authority of the Provisional Government should remove one of the difficulties which have impeded the work of the Allied Council in Vienna, further drastic remedial action will have to be taken if Austria is to be saved from collapse. At present the country is dying under the weight of its burdens—influx of refugees, partition into four zones of occupation, provision of food for Russian forces estimated conservatively at 500,000. Stripped of much of its industrial equipment, claimed by Moscow to be German-owned and legitimate "war booty," Austria is threatened with uncontrollable currency inflation. The country is flooded with Reichsmarks as well as the military Schillings used by the Western Allies. Dr. Renner, it is reported, wants to use Allied Schillings as the basis of currency until new Austrian Schillings can be printed; but action on these lines is being held up by Russian opposition in the Allied Council, which has also reached complete disagreement on the question whether Austrian oil may be bartered for urgently needed Czech coal. If catastrophe in Austria is to be averted, there must be agreement on the part of the Big Five to honour their promise to give Austria independence. This means ending the zoning system forthwith, reducing to token size the present needlessly large occupation forces, and giving the Renner Government genuine autonomy in the economic sphere.

Opposition in Yugoslavia

Is Marshal Tito justified in discovering ulterior motives behind the resignations of Dr. Subasic and M. Sutej? Although they have obviously fallen out with Tito over the arrangements for the forthcoming elections, there are signs that the Opposition in Yugoslavia, as in Bulgaria, is now less concerned with the number of votes they will be able to poll than with manœuvres to secure Allied intervention on their behalf. The greater the handicaps under which they appear to labour, the more plausible will be their argument for Anglo-American pressure or, as some of them desire, the supervision of Yugoslavia by an Allied mission. It is worth noting that Dr. Subasic and M. Sutej have resigned too late to be able to participate in the elections, and that, according to the Yugoslav authorities, Dr. Milan Grol, who resigned some weeks ago, refused to accept Tito's offer of fuller press and radio facilities. Dr. Grol, moreover, is now publishing his newspaper with large gaps, apparently censorship deletions. Either the administration have secretly reimposed the internal censorship—and there is no other evidence of this—or Dr. Grol is deliberately trying to create the impression that it has. If this really is the line now taken by the Opposition—who have not produced any alternative to the National Liberation Front—it is difficult to see what else they hope to gain than to persuade the Allies to withdraw recognition from Tito.

The Price of Dollars

It is not easy to know how much reliance to place on the *Baltimore Sun's* account of the American experts' plan for $5,000 millions credit to Great Britain. In this version, no less than $2,000 millions out of the $5,000 millions would be placed at the disposal of the Dominions, for financing purchases in the U.S.A. They would also get $500 millions in gold from Great Britain, and a further $2,000 millions in "unblocked" sterling, which could be used, in accordance with the Bretton Woods scheme, for purchases in any area. In return, they would have to write off $6,500 millions from Great Britain's debts to them, and to put up $3,000 millions in their own currencies to finance British purchases from them. Great Britain would have to repay the whole $5,000 millions, with interest at 0.4 per cent., over a period of 50 years, beginning in 1951. The *Sun* says nothing about other conditions attaching to the loan, in respect either of imperial preferences or of other forms of "discriminative" trade policy; but it implies that ratification of the Bretton Woods agreement is one of the terms. It is not explicitly stated that the plan is more than a tentative draft drawn up by the American experts, though the British delegation is said to be "in general agreement" with it. We venture to doubt this; for it postulates a readiness to accept a loan involving not only onerous repayment obligations but also endorsement of the Bretton Woods plan without any settlement of the outstanding issues of trade policy. In any case, agreement clearly depends on the attitude of the Dominions, and it would be interesting to know whether India is among the countries which are called on to write off a large proportion of the sterling due to them as a result of war transactions. Such a bargain, made over the heads of the Indian people, who believe that they should have their own independent government, would further exacerbate Indian Nationalism against this country.

Petrol—the Facts?

The Annual Report of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company forms a curious commentary on Mr. Shinwell's explanation of his reasons for withholding a further increase in the petrol ration. The Minister stated that U.K. stocks for civilian consumption are now only 40 per cent. of the pre-war level; that petrol produced from sources in the sterling area is insufficient to meet the area's total needs; and that we must economise in our expenditure of dollars on petrol How far the picture of the stock situation would have been different if Mr. Shinwell had disclosed (and why not have done so ?) the figure of Service stocks, we are not in a position to say ; but we do know that before the war the sterling area had a definite export surplus of crude oil. Now the Anglo-Iranian Report shows that the pre-war deficiency, refining capacity, has been largely made good ; an additional capacity of 4 million tons was brought into service at Abadan in 1944 alone. We should be happier about Mr. Shinwell's policy if he had shown more appreciation of the importance of making Britain independent of dollar supplies by expanding still further, if need be, refineries at Abadan and in this country.

PARLIAMENT : Facing up to it

Wednesday

WHILE the Select Committee completes its Report on the Government proposals for accelerating public business, newcomers to the House are beginning to realise the piecemeal pace of parliamentary procedure and to long for the cut and thrust of a real debate. Not that the two days devoted to Workmen's Compensation last week were unprofitable. This was a subject on which the Minister was sure of himself—Jim Griffith was completely master of the occasion ; and the Trade Unionists and lawyers on the back benches could be relied on to contribute expert advice. There was no debate, but there was useful discussion.

How different from Monday's dreary proceedings on the Committee stage of the Supply and Services Bill ! But at least they gave John Wilmot a chance to shine against a drab background of half-hearted Tory obstructionism—half-hearted because they released us after all in time to catch the last underground train. After dinner, the Chamber filled up—there was a three-line Tory Whip—to hear the set piece of the day ; the amendment to reduce the period of the Emergency Powers from five to two years. In Mr. Churchill's absence, Mr. Eden moved it with a surprising combination of charm and vigour. He was followed by Mr. Christopher Hollis whose maiden speech ranks him with Mr. Hogg and Mr. Walker-Smith as a bright hope of the Opposition. All three retain the metallic brightness of the Oxford Union, where style and manner count for more than content. Despite his wit, Mr. Hollis persuaded no one that he really believed that, whereas a Conservative two-year period meant sweet liberty, the Government's five-year term was Left-Wing despotism. Since this was the first big Debate of the Session, it was a pity that Mr. Chuter Ede made so little effort to answer the Tory case. This was left to D. N. Pritt, who rightly pointed out that in two years' time, the Tories might well be emboldened to use the House of Lords against the Emergency Powers. But, unfortunately, his manner did not carry conviction, and an opportunity was missed of showing the country the real ground of conflict with the Tory Party.

Tuesday's business was equally desultory, notable only for an admirably succinct speech by the Chancellor and a passage between Miss Wilkinson and Mr. Butler, in which the Minister of Education delighted her supporters by reminding the Member for Saffron Walden that she, not he, was now in charge, and that she would administer the Act along Socialist lines.

Chastised in private, before Wednesday lunch, for rebellion—as an old member remarked, backbenchers are only called rebellious when they are right—we listened in the afternoon to a Minister of Health who believes that party discipline is best preserved by fighting His Majesty's Opposition. Aneurin Bevan had a tenuous interim report to make. But how he made it ! Those Tories who had begun to delude themselves that Labour would maintain the spirit of the Coalition sat silent and apprehensive under the lash. This was a Limehouse Socialist, as different from Mr. Attlee as Mr. Lloyd George from Mr. Asquith. Geordie Buchanan, who wound up after the egregious Willink, showed that office had not affected either his humour or pathos. We had experienced our first real debate. PHINEAS

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FREEDOM IN ASIA

THE war in Burma was brought to an end by the friendly co-operation of S.E.A.C. with the National Liberation Army of General Aung San. Although General Aung San had been the Defence Minister under the Japanese in Ba Maw's Cabinet, he had belonged to the anti-Fascist League (the Burmese Resistance Movement) and had founded and built up the Burmese National Army. When Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten's troops began the final campaign, the Burmese National Army came forward and the Japanese surrender followed after little fighting. Burmese national leaders to-day are young, politically conscious men and women ; they are also experienced in many different forms of administration, since the Japanese, who were skilful in exploiting Burmese national feelings, declared Burma an independent State in August 1943 and set up an all-Burmese Cabinet. Lord Louis Mountbatten has throughout recognised the importance of the resistance movement in Burma and appreciated the part it could play in the liberation. The cordial conversations which took place at Kandy between S.E.A.C. Commander and the Burmese leaders may prove a turning point in the relations between Burma and Britain. The King's warm broadcast, publicly read in Rangoon City Hall, will encourage the hope among Burmese that the return of Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith and many of his officers does not imply that the British intend to return to the administrative status quo and to put off constitutional changes long enough to allow British business interests to be reinstalled with none of the safeguards to which the Burmese feel entitled. They will feel safer when the British give a date for national self-government.

The picture in the neighbouring country of Malaya similarly reflects the wisdom of S.E.A.C. in recognising the value of co-operation with the popular forces. The Malayan People's Resistance Army kept up guerrilla activities against the Japanese after the fall of Singapore and sabotaged their supplies, communications and oil dumps. About a year ago Anglo-Australian officers parachuted into the Malayan jungle and supplied arms to the guerrillas. Since then they have worked with the People's Resistance Army under the direction of Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten's headquarters, receiving orders by radio. The army of resistance included 5,000 Chinese, Indians and Malays ; they were coolies and artisans, businessmen and farmers, and, like their European counterparts, they had their own clandestine papers, one in English and one in Chinese. When the Allied troops marched into Malaya, they were greeted with triumphal arches and friendly placards ; a rally, organised by Left-wing resistance groups, celebrated the Allied victory and welcomed the return of British administration. Once again in Malaya, as in Burma, the people who have led the resistance expect real advances towards self-government ; they will not be content to return to their political status before the Japanese occupation, and they will demand a greater share in controlling, and benefiting by, the economic resources of their country. How far the statement made by Mr. George Hall last week on the constitution of a Malayan Union will satisfy local demands remains to be seen ; it is certainly an improvement in that it ends the previously confused administrative divisions. Mr. Hall rightly said that "the Malayan people should be assured of their full share in the rewards of their industry and should be able to feel the country's wealth reflected in their own standard of life."

It may be said, therefore, that in Burma and Malaya a good start has been made and that the need now is for a wise statement of policy. In Indo-China and Indonesia, on the other hand, the French and Dutch both face a serious crisis. In the case of Indo-China it was always clear that to establish French authority would be unpopular and difficult, and General Leclerc said that French authorities anticipated "native turmoil." The majority of French officials were pro-Vichy and the Annamites (who make up three-quarters of the population and are politically advanced) have not forgotten that in 1941 General Catroux handed over the country to the Japanese, and that the policy of his successor, General Decoux, was warmly pro-Japanese. Last March, when the Allies raided Saigon and the Japanese doubted their hold on the country, they occupied the town and established a puppet Government of Annamites. When the Japanese surrendered, the Emperor of Annam, Bag Dai, abdicated and Mgnyen Nai, chief of the Nationalist Viet Nain Party, proclaimed a Republic with himself as President.

It soon became clear that in Indo-China, as in Burma and in Malaya, there was a strongly organised nationalist movement. This had been known to the Allies since last March, when they established contact with the League for the Independence of Indo-China. Subsequently, the Fourteenth Air Force dropped American arms into the country and officers also arrived by parachute to co-operate with the nationalists. Why there was no satisfactory arrangement made for their assistance when Japan surrendered is not yet known. Trouble arose when French soldiers, released from Japanese prisons, stormed the Town Hall in Saigon, after the Annamese Government had rejected their ultimatum to resign. Meanwhile, British and Indian troops intervened, and Major-General Gracey, their Commander, postponed the disarmament of the Japanese troops, and at once started to disarm the Annamites, whose object was to prevent the French from re-establishing their former autocratic rule. The revolt spread round Saigon and as more Allied troops were sent into the area, the strength of the Annamite forces proved greater than was originally estimated.

On October 3rd, three weeks after the Allied landings, a truce was signed, following an announcement by Dr. Thach, Foreign Minister in the Annamese Republican Government, that he was prepared to start conversations with the French. General Gracey, C.-in-C. of the British forces, acted as mediator. The truce has ended and fighting gets heavier. Annamese demands include the return of the Government to Saigon ; the transfer of police and responsibility for public order to the Annamese and withdrawal of French troops into a defined area.

The Annamese will not tolerate a return to French colonial rule. It was intensely unpopular in Indo-China, and a Congress, representing the 25,000 Annamites who are resident in France, have addressed a Memorandum to the United Nations, putting forward a programme similar to that proclaimed by the League for independence of Indo-China last March. It demands a Constituent Assembly, elected by universal, direct and secret suffrage ; the Assembly is to proclaim the independence of Indo-China, and appoint a Government which would frame the constitution of a federation of the three provinces, Annam (Vien-Nam), Cambodia and Laos. This policy contrasts violently with that of the French Government, which proposes to make the Indo-Chinese Federation part of a French Federal Union, represented abroad by a French Governor-General to whom Ministers, "selected" from the Indo-Chinese, as well as French residents, would be responsible. In this French official plan a State Council "composed of the outstanding members of the Federation would assist in preparing laws and regulations." It would be deplorable if British and Indian troops were used to reimpose French colonial rule in its obsolete and discredited form.

Like the French, the Dutch now know that they cannot regain their empire on the old terms without meeting prolonged resistance. Although the Japanese signed their surrender in the Netherlands East Indies on September 8th, they still were in control of Batavia ten days later. Their guards were mounted at key-points and all transport was in their hands. Meanwhile, Dr. Soekarno, leader of the Indonesian Nationalist Movement, made a statement in Batavia on September 24th outlining the political basis of the Indonesian Republic proclaimed on August 17th. Dr. Soekarno is well known for his anti-imperialist views for which he was exiled from 1927 until 1941 by the Dutch Government. During the Japanese occupation, he was President of the Poetera (independence organisation) and a member of the Java Central Council. He has since stated that Indonesians accepted the Japanese offer of political freedom only to consolidate their position. Their aim was complete independence, but there would be no racial discrimination, and all traders would be welcomed. He added that his Cabinet of seventeen members did not plan any violence but would appeal to the United Nations under the terms of the Atlantic Charter for the right of the Netherlands East Indies to elect their own Government. Later, when British and Indian troops were landed, he gave orders to all Indonesians to co-operate with the Allied Occupation Force to maintain law and order.

Major-General Christison, newly appointed Commander in the Netherlands East Indies, first stated that he would employ Japanese forces for police work until the Dutch could take over. But reinforcements were held up by large-scale strikes in Australian ports where Indonesians, supported by Australian trade unions, refused to sail the ships. Meanwhile, there were clashes between Indonesian Republicans and the Japanese, and the Republicans gained control of Bandoeng and Sourabaya. They were soon in control of most of the island outside Batavia. Everywhere the red and white ensign of the Indonesian Government of Dr. Soekarno was in evidence; the first Dutch flag was hoisted by the British on Allied Headquarters. Both General Christison and Lord Louis Mountbatten, fresh from their experience in Burma and Malaya, were friendly to the Nationalists, and certain Dutch officials on the spot were also willing to negotiate with Dr. Soekarno. The Dutch Government at the Hague refused. The Governor-general of the N.E.I. resigned. The Indonesian People's Army has now proclaimed war on the Dutch, and its followers are told to include the British, who are regarded merely as "giving protection to the return of the Dutch administration." This crisis cannot be resolved by repeating the phrases of Queen Wilhelmina's broadcast of 1942 or by attempting to limit negotiations to the reforms which it promised. The Hague Government has now agreed, presumably with British support, to negotiate with the Indonesian leaders, but refuses to deal with Dr. Soekarno. The left-wing press in Holland is loudly demanding negotiations with the Indonesian nationalists.

This is the turning point of British relations with the politically awakened peoples of Asia. The issue can be simply stated. We must, if possible, work in harmony with the Dutch and French. We also need the friendship of the peoples of South-East Asia. Must we sacrifice one friendship for the other? Is it necessary to support all the most reactionary and imperialistic forces in France and Holland, or can we agree with our Western European neighbours on a policy of Asiatic liberation? The argument that many nationalist leaders worked with the Japanese is misleading, for collaboration appeared to many of them the next stage to liberation from their Western conquerors and these movements do now in fact represent the national feeling in these countries. They have enthusiastic support in India. Unless we are prepared to face a long and dishonourable struggle, developing to an ever increasing extent into a war between the white and coloured peoples, the Allies must be prepared to come to terms with the now fully awakened peoples of Asia. The key to the future lies in London, Paris and the Hague.

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SOCIALIST TRANSPORT POLICY

It is regrettable that nationalisation of transport is not included in the legislative programme for the current Parliamentary session. Failing speedy action, there could be a return to the unsatisfactory pre-war conditions. For instance, with the removal of petrol rationing, wasteful road and rail transport competition may easily reappear.

The control agreement under which the railways are operated by the Ministry of War Transport through the Railway Executive Committee, and under which the equivalent of an annual rent is paid, expires one year after the end of the war; agreements with the road transport firms, under which the Ministry's Road Haulage Organisation operates, end six months after the end of the war, but can be renewed, for a further six months. The Government should, therefore, act before the end of the present Parliamentary session. Otherwise, the efficient administrative machine built up during the war to operate transport as a unified whole may tend to disintegrate.

Quick action, moreover, is needed to prevent the railways lavishing on deferred maintenance, as they did in the '20s, the funds accumulated from profitable wartime operation. These funds should be used to reconstruct the transport system according to a general plan. After the last war the railway companies received several millions on account of accumulated depreciation, and as compensation for excessive wear and tear. Already the railway companies, with their eyes on the profits the Government has received, have staked their claims to similar generous treatment. During the four years 1941 to 1944 the Government received £176,199,000 in excess of the annual rental paid the railway companies, including London Transport. With this year's surplus included, there will probably be some £200,000,000 available, which should be earmarked for post-war railway reconstruction, and should form the nucleus of a State transport fund.

The railway companies claim that some £120 million of maintenance has been deferred; but against this there should be placed the numerous improvements to the railway systems carried out by the Government without any cost to the companies. Great stretches of track were doubled to carry the more speedily the vast shipments of war materials to the ports. (The track from Didcot to Southampton was doubled, for instance, to enable vast quantities of war materials to be shipped for the "D-Day" landings.) Similarly, the lack of adequate interchange facilities between the different systems has been made good, and numerous bottlenecks removed which make possible the unified operation of the four main company systems. Much unification has taken place through pooling of wagons and rolling stock, and, to some extent, even staff. A considerable saving has also been effected in accounting. In any case, expenditure out of deferred maintenance should be controlled by the Government and used to modernise and unify the transport system as a whole.

If transport were to return to private enterprise, it might be difficult to dispute the railways' case for higher charges. With the decline in Government traffics, and renewed competition from road transport, gross traffics would decline substantially, even with the carrying out of Labour's Full Employment policy. Unless the transport industry is unified under public ownership a demand for increased charges is certain. In present circumstances trade and industry cannot afford an increase in transport costs, especially in view of our export needs.

To argue that public ownership in itself would assure profitable operation of the railways would be foolish, but great economies would result from unification, and the State would be able to provide cheap finance for reconstruction and development, including electrification. The greatest saving, however, could be effected in interest charges, provided the capital given in compensation were Government, or Government-guaranteed, stock. The purchase of the railway companies would be comparatively simple. The annual wartime payment to the railway companies of some £40 million (excluding London Transport) could be capitalised by applying a number of years' purchase; determination of the number of years would be left to a Tribunal which would value the railway system as a going concern in the light of circumstances prevailing in March, 1939. The resultant global sum could be distributed to the railway companies in Government-guaranteed stock of the public corporation created to acquire and operate the railways. The saving in interest charges would be considerable, and might make all the difference between profitable and unprofitable operation, and the necessity, or not, to raise charges.

Full benefits of a nationalised railway system can only be effected if the road transport industry is also publicly owned. Here also, the quicker the action the simpler the process. The Ministry of War Transport Road Haulage Organisation operates some 34,000 vehicles. These, together with the railways' interests in road haulage, which would be acquired on their nationalisation, would constitute a publicly owned road transport system. At present the concerns that make up the Road Haulage Organisation receive the average profits of two pre-war years, or a percentage on capital, and their permanent acquisition offers little difficulty; the present annual payments could be capitalised and Government-guaranteed stock distributed as the purchase price. Acquisition of the railways would also bring under Government ownership the largest firms outside the scheme, namely, Carter Paterson's, Pickford's and Wordies, which for some inexplicable reason were allowed to stay outside the Road Haulage Organisation. Haulage firms unaffected could be given the opportunity of coming in on the same basis, or of operating on short hauls only.

Throughout the war, road haulage, to save fuel, rubber and labour, was operated on the basis of refusing all traffic that could be carried by other forms of transport. Its successful operation was judged by standards contrary to all normal business practice. The policy now needs to be reversed; acceptance of traffic by road and rail should be decided in the light of comparative economic advantage. Delay in deciding the future of road haulage handicaps future development. In this connection a warning is necessary that when figures of wartime operation of the Road Haulage Organisation are published they will show a large deficit because the bulk of Government traffic has been carried without charge; the organisation has been a free service department to the Government. In some cases, however, standard rates have been worked out, and charged for the carriage of certain commodities, such as utility furniture, and these can provide the basis of a new rate structure for road transport. The lack of standardised rates was partly responsible for the uneconomic, chaotic pre-war situation.

The same urgency applies to the nationalisation of other forms of transport, viz., canals, coastwise shipping and air lines, where special considerations apply. The Labour Party and the T.U.C. have both formulated plans for the organisation of publicly owned transport. If quick action were taken, however, by retaining much of the administrative machine created by the Ministry of War Transport, it would be possible to avoid some of the elaborate machinery these two schemes envisage. Creation of public corporations for each of the varying forms of transport is desirable, but the overall transport authority could well be in the first instance the Ministry of Transport itself, rather than a newly created National Transport Authority, as the T.U.C. proposes. The Ministry has successfully co-ordinated and, to a large extent, unified transport; and through its various committees and regional organisations it has created an administrative machine which can be readily adjusted to the peace-time requirements of a publicly owned transport industry. To utilise the existing machine, in the first instance, would save time which the setting up of additional authorities would require. The Labour Government will have difficulties enough in carrying out its programme of nationalisation; it would be sound policy to proceed speedily with the conversion to public ownership of one industry ready for it and where the earlier the action the simpler the problem.

ERNEST DAVIES

GERMANY REVISITED

II.—THE BRITISH ZONE

As the *Autobahn* swung past Brunswick, we met a convoy of fifty Volkswagen, dazzlingly smart in bright red paint. They were the first new civilian vehicles I had seen in years, and each was neatly inscribed "*Deutsche Reichspost*." Those mail vans stood out in retrospect as symbols of the British Zone. I remembered them as I sat in the pleasant office of the military governor of Hamburg studying the colossal chart of the German civic administration and hearing how, out of the present population of a million and a quarter, only 8,000 were unemployed. From outside came the roar of the street, the noise of jostling traffic mixed with the patter on the pavement of busy people bustling to and fro. This city, I suddenly realised, seems queer because, though it has been bombed to smithereens like Berlin, it is alive. Hamburg streets are filled not only with the traffic of an occupying army, but with that of the Germans themselves. Unlike Berlin, the ghost capital, it is a German city miraculously convalescent after a serious illness; a bit uncertain on its feet, but rapidly gaining confidence again in its own powers.

Of course Hamburg is not typical. I had been told in advance that it is the show place of the zone; and if I had chosen to go to the Ruhr, I should have found a very different atmosphere. But if Hamburg is exceptional, it is an exception which British military Government is trying to turn into the rule. It typifies the achievements and the failures of our Zone.

* * *

"We are nursing this country back to normal life." A young Intelligence officer was talking to me in a placid Westphalian village, untouched by war. The more I reflected on his remark, the more I appreciated his sensitive choice of words. Whereas the Russians have decided on surgery without anæsthetics, we are restoring the patient's strength before deciding whether an operation is necessary. Typical of our attitude was "Operation Barleycorn," the first stroke of British policy after VE-day, which sent hundreds of thousands of German soldiers back to the land after the scantiest of interrogations. We had, in unity with our Allies, announced that the Germans should help themselves in the battle against starvation. Unlike our Allies, we made it possible for them to help themselves by releasing the necessary labour. While our British engineers repaired the roads and bridges along which the food convoys must pass, the German army was sent back to the farms to save the harvest. The result is obvious enough to-day as you motor through the country. In the British zone every field seems to be cultivated, and there are plenty of cattle as well—an astonishing contrast with the countryside on either side of the *Autobahn* in the Russian sector west of Berlin. There can be no question that, on the economic side, a remarkable job has been done by General Templar and his staff. Unless their work is cancelled by the flood of refugees from the East, they will have saved millions of lives this winter.

But the German peasant does not sow his wheat simply because of a sound economic policy on the part of the occupying Power. The real achievement of British military government has been the restoration of law and order. The Westphalian peasant works in his fields because he is confident that his produce will not be pillaged or "requisitioned," and that some time there will be consumers' goods from the factories in the towns which he can buy in exchange for it. The factories are opening up because there is confidence on the part of employers; the workers clock in because they believe that the wages which they are paid, though they are not worth much now, will not be turned into waste paper by inflation. "Law and order" is the tonic which has made convalescence in the British zone so rapid. It explains that strange contrast between the business and noisiness of the streets of Hanover or Hamburg and the anxious hush of the Berlin crowd. Here in the west the Germans are not afraid of the present; and, as for the future, no one has the energy to worry about it. If General Templar were a Marxist he might call this phase of our occupation N.E.P., the attempt to get economic life started again at all costs by restoring confidence and rewarding initiative whatever its motive.

Not unexpectedly the professional soldier takes very naturally to this sort of work. His habits of mind derive from an imperial tradition. To administer a subject people with paternal solicitude, to extemporise in an economic emergency, this is a way of life which comes instinctively to most British people and particularly to the professional soldier in whose mind command is identical with responsibility for the welfare of those to whom he gives the orders. These men cannot help looking after anyone whose life is placed in their hands. The job gets hold of them and they are very happy doing it. How often I heard the complaint: "Those confounded Displaced Persons—they are the real enemy here. The old Hun is no trouble." The men who talk like that are not anti-Pole or pro-German. They are administrators, each of whom wants to see his little kingdom orderly and efficient, and regards anyone who disturbs the peace as a criminal.

* * *

The trouble starts, of course, when you begin asking yourself where all this is leading. The Germans, especially those who have accepted the Nazi leadership-principle, are delighted to be run by the British, who order them about more efficiently, more humanely and much less corruptly than their own leaders. Indeed the only Germans who prove really difficult are the minority of anti-Fascists who spoil the atmosphere by "dragging in politics" and making troublesome demands for wholesale denazification. The British administrator naturally prefers a tame German—many Nazis and crypto-Nazis are willing to be very tame—and gets impatient with the refractory German democrat. Indeed he is inclined to smack him down as an agitator or a trouble-maker or a Communist. The gaols are packed full already. A German, therefore, who has just come home from Dachau and denounces the extremely competent local Sewage Inspector, a couple of business men whose factories have just begun to make some useful commodities, and the Burgomaster, as a gang of Nazis, is often regarded not as a friendly adviser but as a confounded nuisance. At almost every point this autumn, denazification and the encouragement of active anti-Fascist activity seem to conflict with administrative efficiency. It is far simpler and far more efficient *in the short run* to take over where the Nazis left off, removing only the most prominent Party Leaders and war criminals, than to permit the drastic purge of German by German which is the only real foundation for German political re-education.

Judged indeed from this angle, the British zone is probably far behind the Russian or even the French. Starved of political intelligence—the staff in the field and at Headquarters is undermanned and under-ranked—and without any firm political directive from the top, we are cultivating a good many tares among the wheat. Nazis as well as non-Nazis are regaining confidence; anti-Nazis, maddened by the non-political spirit of military government, are growing desperate, as they watch what they regard as the social structure of German militarism humanely nursed back to health. How can it possibly be otherwise when no economic or industrial policy has been initiated for breaking the power of the Junker and industrialist class? I suggested earlier that General Templar could justify his policy as an N.E.P. But Lenin's N.E.P. was a deliberately calculated breathing space before the next Socialist wave. The first Five Years' Plan submerged all the Nep-men. In Western Germany to-day no one knows whether the present political directive may not be intended for the duration.

I am not convinced by the argument that the present political line—which includes a tacit discouragement of real party and trade-union activity by the device of smothering them in red tape—is inevitable in order to maintain production. Indeed I would hazard a guess that production in the Ruhr would actually be increased if we announced our intention of expropriating without compensation the coal owners and industrialists, sharing ownership with the French, Belgian and Dutch Governments and establishing in the end an international control. Equally I am not convinced that it is necessary to keep so many units of the Wehrmacht in being and to form new militarised German Labout Battalions under German officers, especially when it is almost impossible, under British law, to convict these Wehrmacht officers of the petty insubordination and sabotage in which they indulge. Some areas of the British zone are still extremely Nazi in temper; and the Nazis are plucking up courage now that they see that nothing is happening to them. Indeed, very often we protect them from their own countrymen.

The trouble is that we are assuming far too much direct control—instead of pushing responsibility on the politically minded anti-Fascists and exerting indirect control through them. But in order to attempt this latter course, we should have to put into the field a far larger Intelligence Corps and equip the local Military Governors with political advisers who really understand German history and psychology. And, above all, we should have to make up our minds what sort of Germany we want to see finally emerge, and argue it out with the three other Occupying Powers. Until and unless we do that, the British zone will remain the best administered and the happiest zone in Germany, but also a refuge and a haven of German militarism—and a cause of dissension among our Allies.

R. H. S. CROSSMAN

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to C. Stupplef

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Canon H. S. Marriott asked whether Wilby could be placed on the priority list for timber houses if a further allocation were made. Wilby, he said, should have two because there were two very bad houses there. The occupants could be seen in bed, with their feet coming through the windows. They had to put umbrellas up to keep the rain off the beds. It was neither decent nor civilised.—*Norfolk and Suffolk Journal.*

A fancy dress dance held in Eastriggs, Dumfriesshire, in aid of the Welcome Home Fund, raised £36. The "Belsen Beast" won first prize as the most original costume.—*The Bulletin*

On one race for small boys at Workington £5,000 changed hands. And on these children's races the same tricks that the race gangs try on dogs and horses are used. Little girls have been bribed to lose.

One small boy, a hot favourite at a footrace meeting, was nobbled by a tout who stuffed him full of ice cream just before the start.—*Sunday Express.*

NATIONALISING "THE OLD LADY"

THE proprietors of the Bank of England have made as yet no protest against Nationalisation. After all, their income (now State-guaranteed) remains unaltered. The Governor himself has accepted the situation with the promptitude of a salaried manager welcoming a new boss. What is more, he met the general managers of the joint stock banks on the day the Bill was published and managed somehow to wheedle out of them a promise of co-operation. Thus, not only did the citadel of the City fall without a shot being fired by the garrison, but the Governor seems to have disarmed his own forces. Is the Bill, then, just a symbolic, and superfluous Act marking the passage from free to controlled capitalism which had already taken place? Not entirely. True, the Bank had nothing like the power it had when it operated the old-time gold standard and was free to make money dear and bring down prices by creating unemployment and distress. Nevertheless, under private ownership and control, it could make itself a great nuisance if it came to a fight between "free" capitalists and a Socialist Parliament. It could refuse to co-operate, hold up Government schemes of reconstruction, allow credit to be diverted to wrong channels and instigate, if it felt so disposed, another "bankers' ramp" by threatening the Government that, unless Socialist policy were changed, it would not answer for British credit or the pound sterling. The Bank had a Board of twenty-four directors representing broadly monied interests of the City and industrial corporations in the provinces. It would have been unreasonable to have expected them always to love and cherish Socialist finance. Besides, the control which the Bank exercised over the commercial banks was a conventional one—it had no statutory powers. Even if it was willing to co-operate with a Labour Government, it could not force the joint-stock bank managers to co-operate against their will.

This being so, the measure of autonomy which the Bill gives the new Bank Court is surprising. The Treasury is empowered to give the Bank "such directions as, *after consultation with the Governor,* they think necessary in the public interest." This limits the directions and gives the Governor the right of prior argument. Subject to such directions, the affairs of the Bank are to be managed by the Court of Directors, consisting of the Governor and Deputy Governor appointed for five years, and sixteen Directors appointed for four years, four of them retiring "on each anniversary of the appointed day." If the Government does not redress the balance of power in the Court, it will err gravely: it is surely trusting too much to Providence to suppose that no great issue will arise in the lifetime of this Parliament on which Conservative bank directors might oppose a Socialist intention.

The Bill is silent about the functions of the new Bank, but it is to be presumed that some of its old functions will be handed over to other bodies. For example, the control of new issues, which is the key nowadays to the control of the rate of interest, will presumably pass from the Capital Issues Committee to the National Investment Board as soon as it is launched. Moreover, it will be the duty of the National Investment Board to promote or initiate schemes of industrial reconstruction which the old Bank of England used to father in a fitful and restrictive manner.

But the most important functions of a Central Bank—the control of credit, currency and the exchanges—will now be legally enforceable by the new Bank of England. In view of our unbalanced international account no one will deny that it is proper for the Bank to control our foreign exchanges and prevent the export of capital. But there is bitter City opposition to Section IV of the Bill—the sting in the tail—which gives the Bank certain statutory powers over the joint-stock banks with the words: "The Bank may, if it is necessary in the public interest, request information from and make recommendations to bankers, and may, *if so authorised by the Treasury,* issue directions to any banker for the purpose of securing that effect is given to any such request or recommendation." Though the effect of the words italicised is, apparently, to leave the initiative with the Bank, and the Bill provides no sanctions in the event of a bank's snapping its fingers at "The Old Lady," the City is afraid that the Government will use its powers under this clause to "snoop" and pry into individual bank accounts and prevent customers from obtaining credit because they are politically objectionable.

The intention of the Labour Party was unequivocably expressed in its election manifesto, which said, *inter alia,* "The operations of the other banks must be harmonised with industrial needs." In other words, it sought control over the distribution of credit. If, for example, the Government wished to expand credit and instructed the Bank to create additional bank cash by buying securities, it would be intolerable if the joint-stock banks neutralised this addition to their cash by raising their cash ratio above the normal 10 per cent. Again, if the Government wished to reduce the rate of interest and lowered the Bank rate, it would be equally intolerable if the joint-stock banks refused to reduce their charges on advances or the rates allowed to their depositors. Or again, the joint-stock banks might vitiate Government policy by deciding, say, to finance an undue proportion of luxury production when utility goods were needed. Whether Labour's intention will be achieved by the permissive powers of Section IV, and—above all—what is to be the composition of the future Bank Court, are points which will require elucidation by Mr. Dalton in debate.

A LONDON DIARY

THE suspension by the B.B.C. European Service of the Spanish programme organiser and his senior Talks Assistant brings to a head a protracted conflict. The Sunday evening political commentary and the "Answers to Correspondents"—two programmes on which the B.B.C.'s popularity in Spain is chiefly based—are also, I hear, to be replaced by safe and "non-political" programmes. The B.B.C. may, of course, argue that this is merely a matter of internal discipline. But it is difficult to see how such a violent *Gleichschaltung* can fail to be regarded in Spain as a matter of first-rate political importance, and a direct reflection of Mr. Bevin's policy. If this is so, it is vital that the Minister of Information and the Foreign Secretary should institute a thorough investigation of the whole affair. It would reveal some very remarkable facts.

* * *

What happened, as far as I can discover, is this. During the war our Spanish News Service was universally admitted to have done a good job in very difficult circumstances. Britain was temporising with Franco, yet we were determined to run a news service which gave the news objectively and, in its commentaries, faithfully upheld the liberties for which we were fighting. Our Embassy in Madrid, and in particular its Catholic press attaché, Mr. Burns, often objected violently to the B.B.C. policy; but, generally speaking, the B.B.C. was upheld by the Government. Soon after VE-day the European Service was reorganised. The Spanish Service was now grouped in a South European Service, and since religion is at the root of the Spanish controversy, it is relevant to say that both the men put in charge were sincere and devout Catholics. Simultaneously, despite the change of Government and Mr. Bevin's statement looking forward to a "change" in Spain, the Madrid Embassy renewed its attacks on the B.B.C. commentary. The climax came on Sunday, October 7th. The political commentary was devoted to an analysis of the breakdown of the Foreign Ministers' Conference and stated that:

> **On the question of representative governments, the United Nations have shown themselves firm, and it would be childish to think that their firmness applies only to those countries of Eastern Europe whose political characteristics have always been difficult to define . . . In these days it is not enough to talk about democracy, the will of the people, or traditional regimes. It is necessary to see that these things are ratified by the peoples' will.**

In order better to illustrate the British point of view, the commentator then quoted the *Observer's* diplomatic correspondent's view of Dr. Salazar's dissolution of the Portuguese National Assembly and ended by stressing the need for pooling efforts so that "the nation may come to be, not what these or those circles want it to be, but what the people themselves want it to be." This was too much for the B.B.C. controllers. The programme organiser was suspended and all political commentaries in Spanish were stopped. I have carefully read the whole of this commentary. It was cautious and involved; in my view it would have been better to explain in more categoric terms the views of the British people about the Franco regime. The B.B.C. should be at least as outspoken as the Foreign Secretary. Yet the grounds for suspending the commentary were that it was too strong and provocative. One redeeming feature is that the Foreign Secretary and the Minister of Information have now an excellent chance of making perfectly clear to the Spanish people how gladly the Labour Government would welcome a return to democracy in Spain.

* * *

Was it necessary to revive Laval for the firing squad? This ending was the final macabre touch in a trial in which prosecutors and judges cut as ignoble a figure as the sordid personality of the accused. There is no room in the world for Laval and his like; but the proceedings were a travesty of the democratic justice they professed to mete out. One is left with the impression that it was never intended to give Laval a chance to develop his defence. It might have implicated too many others.

* * *

Report says that when Mr. Bevin was asked if he were "pro-American or pro-Soviet," he replied that he was "pro-British." Most of us in our time have made this very natural retort to a silly question. We all found out how British we were during the war, if we did not know before. The Russians and Americans and Germans have made similar discoveries about the strength of their patriotism—still the strongest psychological force in the world. But wiser generations have known that to be in favour of your own side is the most common and least adequate of emotions. Personally I have always thought that Jesus Christ got the point right in certain often quoted remarks condemning exclusive nationalism. Edith Cavell did not, it should be recalled, attack patriotism: she only said that it was not enough. So to-day no one doubts that Mr. Bevin or Mr. Churchill, or indeed any of our public figures, are pro-British: the question is how they fit their patriotism into the needs of the world. Does, for instance, being pro-British mean that we must adopt a "what we have we hold" policy and reject, for instance, a very reasonable Chinese compromise about Hongkong, which, after all, we took by force from China in the nineteenth century? My trouble with much honest nationalism to-day is that it displays itself in a game of grab-as-grab-can that would have shocked Mr. Gladstone, and which in days of the atomic bomb is about as relevant and sensible as settling matters of honour and etiquette by private duelling.

* * *

As a matter of fact, those who are so pleased about Mr Bevin's bull-dog nationalism do him an injustice. He has imagination and thinks in bigger terms than frontiers. He showed this at the Foreign Ministers' Conference in the matter of the European water-ways. The Americans agreed to supply dredgers and other machinery for the development of four great European rivers; the scheme would have meant the beginning of European recovery under the joint control of the Great Powers. Mr. Bevin proposed the scheme; Mr. Molotov turned it down flat. I suppose the Russians so fear Allied intentions in the valley of the Danube that they cannot even be tempted by the offer of a share on the Rhine and the Elbe. Anyway, I sympathise with Mr. Bevin who really cares about the promise of "freedom from want."

* * *

A correspondent, who was an eye witness of the Municipal Elections in Budapest, fully confirms reports that the voting was "free": nearly 90 per cent. of the registered voters (the largest percentage in the history of Budapest) went to the polls without the slightest incident. How account for the unexpected success of the Agrarian Party? There is little doubt, according to my friend, that the Social Democrats suffered from running on a joint ticket with the Communists; and it is possible that before the General Elections for Parliament on November 4th, the Social Democrats may decide to stand with an independent list of their own. It would be a mistake, I gather, to regard the Agrarian Party's success as a real victory for "liberalism." The Party's present leaders are sturdy democrats and honest men, but it should be remembered that the Agrarians were the party of Tibor Eckhardt, and their ranks include quite a lot of the riff-raff of earlier regimes. After the election results were announced, my correspondent watched an impromptu victory parade, in which there were a significant number of national flags and not a few Fascist salutes from the marchers. The fact that the people of Budapest voted for a party which is capable of moving far to the Right is symptomatic of the extent to which Hungary has turned against the Communist Party, which is now associated in the public mind with the highly unpopular Russian Army of Occupation.

* * *

It seems rather stupid to refuse a visa to the Albanian delegate to the World Youth Conference which opens in London shortly. The refusal, apparently, is due to the fact that we have no diplomatic relations with the present Albanian regime. The same reason is also causing difficulties for the Bulgarian and Rumanian delegates. Isn't this carrying things too far? Nobody really believes that a permit to enter Britain given to a young Albanian would constitute recognition of his government. Anyway, after the Russian Revolution the same sort of objection was raised, but in the end the Cabinet had to allow Krassin to come here as the trade envoy of his country long before the Soviet Union was recognised.

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Perhaps the most striking legacy of the *Luftwaffe* is the stimulus the blitz gave to local patriotism and public interest in town-planning. Here are three booklets to emphasise the appetite for imaginative planning. Two of them are political: *Your Windsor* (6*d*.), produced by the Windsor Labour Party, and *Cambridge To-day and To-morrow* (6*d*.), issued by the local Communists, are something more than election manifestoes. Both of them are excellently designed discussions of the development of the two towns and make detailed proposals for improvements. The third, *English City* (published at 10*s*. 6*d*. by the University of London Press) has been prepared by Fry's to show, mainly by drawings and photographs, the heritage of Bristol and the opportunity its citizens have to rebuild it worthily. People are discovering that Local Government means something more than rates and sanitary inspectors. Critic

STONE WALLS OF CORINTH

I was attracted to the building by the double row of barbed wire, the armed National Guards and the women—wives of the prisoners—who stood on the street corner watching, without speech, the melancholy faces at the windows. The officer of the guard, Lt. Skourkeas, obtained permission from the Commandant for me to inspect the gaol. "This wasn't really built as a prison," he explained to me in advance. "In fact, it was originally the Corinth Law Court, the Corinth Tribunal." By an inversion, not unfamiliar in Greece to-day, the Tribunal is being used as a prison in order temporarily to house the prisoners whom there are not enough tribunals to try. Five hundred and eighty prisoners, including about a dozen women, are held in this building, most of them since March, all of them charged with capital offences.

Without beds, bunks or mattresses, they lay on the bare floor, shoulder to shoulder, and head to feet. A narrow passage down the centre of the room gave them the only opportunity of movement. The smell of stale urine from the flooded lavatories penetrated into every room, The prisoners spoke quietly among themselves as people do at a funeral.

When they heard that I was a British Member of Parliament, they crowded round me, silencing those who wanted to make personal complaints and directing me to their spokesman, Dr. Alexander Dokas, a member of the People's Tribunal of the 3rd Elas Division. Like most of the other Elas prisoners, Dokas is charged with murder; that is to say, as a member of a revolutionary tribunal during the period when E.A.M. was trying to take authority, he joined in condemning collaborators to death. It was a period when criminal and homicidal elements attached themselves to the fringe of the National Liberation Movement, and helped to bring undeserved discredit to E.A.M. as a whole. But the men in the Corinth Prison, as they listened, like disciplined soldiers, to their representatives stating their case, seemed what they claimed to be—members of a people's movement whose aim was to purge themselves not merely of an alien tyranny but also of their native Fascism, men who had not killed for personal gain or advantage. But who had killed Greek Fascists in a revolutionary struggle, as they had killed German and Italian Fascists in their guerrilla war of national liberation. One prisoner showed me the red, raw stump of his leg. "That," he said, "is what I gave for my country, fighting the Italians in the Albanian mountains. And this," pointing to the prison, "is my reward."

At the present rate of judicial examination, it will take something like 3½ years to hear the cases of the 17,000 prisoners now in gaol. The police are reputed to hold a further 50,000 warrants which will be executed, according to present arrangements, when there are vacancies in the prisons. (I do not find it difficult to believe that if the 580 prisoners in Corinth Gaol spend the winter without mattresses, blankets or heat, there will be a few hundred empty spaces due to natural mortality before next Spring.) It is understandable that the police should have more charges than they can comfortably handle, because anyone can be arrested on the simple denunciation of two persons supported by a witness. Since last December, that is how the vendetta of the extreme Right against E.A.M. has been carried on. The absence of a Habeas Corpus Act has made this kind of vengeance easy.

Admiral Voulgaris claimed that the present prison population of Greece is there for civil crimes, not for political offences. The definition of "civil crime" should be examined, particularly in view of the fact that Ernest Bevin's exhortation to empty the prisons has not been held to cover civil crimes. Unless the violent activities of E.A.M. supporters in the abnormal period of political excitement, following the expulsion of the foreign invader, are defined as political actions covered by a general amnesty, and not as the civil crimes which the Right alleges them to be, the prisons will remain full. The police prejudge every case where an E.A.M. supporter is charged. The dilemma of a detained Left Winger is to decide whether he prefers an unjust detention to an unfair trial.

The hundreds of thousands throughout Greece who are either in the National Movement of Liberation or, like the E.L.D. Socialists, are in sympathy with it, wish to take part in the revival of Greek democracy but are administratively excluded. Those who are not in prison, under surveillance, or hiding in the mountains, are theoretically equal in rights with other Greek citizens; in practice, they are not. No member of a former E.L.A.S fighting unit is allowed to join the reconstituted police and gendarmerie. Their names are on a list of undesirables. Since the police carry out a large number of civic functions, such as preparing the electoral registers, the exclusion of E.A.M. from its ranks is of some relevance to the fairness of the coming elections.

Under Sir Charles Wickham's guidance, the reorganisation of the police and gendarmerie is going well. The National Guard—refuge of many members of the Security Battalions—is being deprived of its tasks of preserving order. Both Right and Left approved the sincerity of Sir Charles's intentions, though the Left deplores his exclusion of E.A.M. members from the police and his admission of X-ites, the Monarchists' strong-arm men. But his clean-up of the police and his restraint of their hitherto brutal methods will not be adequate to establish public confidence unless the Government itself has the willing co-operation of the people.

The Voulgaris Caretaker Government—a Government dangling on Foreign Office strings—never got full co-operation from any section of Greece, let alone from a popular majority. Its most democratic action was to tolerate the licence of a press, whose irresponsibility (as of the Royalist paper which suggested that Britain drops an atomic bomb on Moscow) is a symptom of the malaise which comes from the imposition of an arbitrary but weak government on a turbulent but politically thwarted public opinion. Will elections on January 20th give Greece the opportunity of finding her democratic voice? With seventeen thousand political leaders in gaol, tens of thousands proscribed or in hiding, with electoral lists suspect and boycotted, and the X-ite squads still actively beating-up the Left with police connivance, it is impossible to think that fair elections can be held.

While Admiral Voulgaris's Government was in power, a general amnesty would have been dangerous for the prisoners, since the police could not be guaranteed to protect them from the vendetta of the Right. Given an all-party political government, a police and gendarmerie assisted by Sir Charles Wickham and a Civil Service Commission sent, as I hope, from Britain to reorganise the corrupt and inefficient Civil Service, Greece should be able in time to hold real elections, even without the need of extra Allied supervisors to keep order. But not before next Spring.

Maurice Edelman

THE FISH QUEUE

At the other end of the fish queue it is more romantic. The farthest away that you can get, there is Mr. Miskelly, of Grimsby. He has just come out of the Navy, minesweeping, and likes it better. "You only have one gaffer on a trawler," he says. Mr. Miskelly, of Grimsby, is so rock-faced that it is difficult to imagine him ever standing for more than one gaffer. But that is what he says. He was engineer in the navy and is a trawler-engineer in the fish trade. He makes about £10 every trip as his share of a good catch, and is at sea about ten days in every fifteen. There is little wonder that Mrs. Miskelly was slightly aghast when he went down to the docks a few days after being demobilised.

Also with Mr. Miskelly there is the boy who has just stepped out of the taxi at the owners' office. The boy was too quick in and out for his name to be taken, but the general idea is that he is a "deckie-learner" substituting this trip for a man who has not turned up after being engaged. That man is an absentee and will be fined a fiver or so at the local police court. The owners keep this taxi going all morning to pick up late-comers and to find substitutes; for, if the crew is not complete, the trawler will not go to sea. A local trade union official says that fishermen are still fishermen, so it is not unnatural that most of the substitutes are picked up in the pubs. It pays the firm to keep this taxi going on the morning when a ship sails. This boy is in his best clothes, but will collect his seagoing clothes later. He will live in the thick white trousers and half a dozen sweaters till the end of the trip, and will perhaps have a thin and blonde growth of beard by that time, for it is not etiquette to shave on a Grimsby trawler. He will walk off the ship with eight pounds or so, eight or ten days from now. But it's no good him making a date for a week next Sunday. Whether it's the Dogger Bank or Bear Island, you can't make definite dates.

Next in line towards the head of the fish queue is the lumper, pronounced loomper. He unpacks the ice-cold fish in the hold, and others work the winches that bring the baskets to the quay. The fish has been cleaned on deck, out there as soon as caught, but there is a lot of messy business still to be done. It is not a very modern method of getting fish ashore, but Grimsby suffers from having the daylights bombed out of it, and it is only lately that they have put a roof over this long, cold, concrete market. The other side of the long shed are the four o'clock trains to London, Leeds, Manchester and the West of England. A hundred and forty-four ships go out of Grimsby these days, against 400 before the war; the fish experts say that when more go out, the railways won't be able to cope with the trade with the present system, so the queue may still be there. The railways hesitantly say they will cope. Both sides are still speaking to each other in quite a pleasant tone of voice.

Then there is the owner. A firm owns anything from five to fifty trawlers. The offices are still fishy, but in a nice fresh way, and are down on the docks. Some of the principals wear clogs for their sloppy business on the market, and change for lunch in the club or canteen. There is a pleasant camaraderie between owners and fishermen. Although the unions talk sometimes of "better conditions," you find men who boast of having been ten and twenty years with the one firm. Yet there is no trade in which a man can change owners so rapidly. There is nothing against a man changing ships every trip.

It is bracing, here in the port where 75 per cent. of the people of Grimsby work, and on which Grimsby depends. And in that 75 per cent. must be reckoned the sharks who live on the fishermen. A whole coterie of them, it is said, could make their return to the Income Tax authorities as "Occupation: fleecing fishermen." Their fishing is done in a local square, where they meet the homecoming shoal of men with money in their pockets, and fling out their nets without the need for subtlety. Tales are told of a skipper with over a hundred pounds in his pocket, landing at Grimsby and being broke in two days. The wife of one skipper met her man with a taxi, year after year, taking him far out into the country; the wife of another bravely steered him past his old friends on foot, returning him to their company later in the evening with a few modest pounds in his pocket. But others never get past Riby Square. A poor square with nothing but a bank or two, a pub or two, some little shops and a bus crossing. But Grimsby men don't go out of the town to spend their money. Grimsby, for its fishermen, has everything that makes a big town.

They have plans in Grimsby for modernising the handling of fish, for more scientific ice-packing and more refrigerator cars, but there is one 2,000-year-old activity that maybe will never change. Up in the attic of one of the buildings ten girls are braiding the nets. Two of them are cripples. But all of them must be fantastically healthy to keep at their work. Standing or sitting on boxes, and listening almost interminably to the B.B.C., they lunge forward and backward with their shuttles. Each knot is pulled tight by a sudden backward pull with the whole body, much as a bad rider will jerk back with the reins, throwing his shoulders into it. The whole room is a picture of girls jerking their shoulders back, their fingers slicking the little piece of wood through the coarse yellow cord. It's piecework, and the fastest will draw three pound ten at the end of the week. The ten of them are kept busy for one firm, fishing fifteen trawlers. For they say the material isn't what it was, and the North Sea is tough. Two thousand years ago there was just such a scene, without the B.B.C. But the cord was better.

A long line of empty sheds and rusty railway lines is the picture of our Continental trade to-day. These were the sheds where Grimsby handled goods for Europe and the East. Across the water, where the Admiralty still hold on to part of the docks, there is quiet activity on the minesweepers with their proud badges on their funnels, so many bars, chevrons and crowns for their score in mines. But here there is not even a ship's boy to disturb the melancholy. A vast and echoing temple dedicated to the folly of war.

The fish queues, they say in Grimsby, will remain till the spring. The old vicious circle is named again, labour and lack of transport and lack of ships and slow demobilisation and lack of labour. The trade unions have gone for the smaller amenities of life for the fishermen, the system of hiring them and summoning them, and the hours of sleep on board. The fish merchants say they have never yet dumped an eatable load back in the harbour. The fishermen themselves only know that they are working to capacity and that fish are plentiful.

Here, then, is a town that knows what it's doing. Here are men who don't want Government interference, subsidies or civil servants, so long as they can get on with the job. They claim that for all the fishy atmosphere, here is the cleanest town in England, and there are young men of eighty on the Council, aggressive and eager octogenarians, who will bark angrily if anybody says a word against Grimsby. Not that anybody does. For the opportunity for grumbling does not exist in Grimsby. You see, there has never been a fish queue there.

Roland Wild

RADIO NOTES

The object of the radio feature, as I understand it, is to confer actuality on a group of facts. When this is not achieved, the failure is apt to be far more disastrous than that of a plain talk, which, when unsuccessful, is rarely anything worse than dull. Take the case of Sir Max Beerbohm, who has won a deserved reputation as one of the best broadcasters alive. Last week he had us all agog to hear him again. The subject—Play Going—was peculiarly his own. Surely the result could not fail to be enchanting. . . . Yet I think it did. Sir Max seemed in less than his usual form. There were a few delightfully characteristic touches (particularly the concluding sentences), which would have made a cat laugh; but the usual wit and verve, and above all those impressions of great theatrical figures of the Nineties to which we surely had a right to look forward: these were dismally absent. The broadcast, then, seemed to me, relatively speaking, dull. Yet how much—how very much—worse; how altogether horrible, a tasteless and perfunctory dramatisation of the same material would have been! The Features Department, and Miss Marjorie Banks, bear a heavy responsibility for *Maquis,* ~~a~~ semi-dramatised version of George Millar's enthralling book. I hope this clumsy, melodramatic, and absurd affair will long be held against all those in any way connected with it (with the exception of the actor who played the American pilot), and return periodically to haunt their dreams with its disgusting shadow. Mr. Millar's book was probably the best of its kind we have had over here: it was so good because it was well written, understated, and exactly observed. The sense of reality emitted by so "unreal" a subject was both startling and convincing. In the radio version all this disappeared completely: we might have been listening to something by Henty. Mr. Millar has an attractive voice, and if he had confined himself to straight narration, some sense might have disengaged itself from the dusty pile of theatrical lumber that surrounded him. But alas! he elected to "act," thus placing himself on a level with all the stage Frenchmen and mustachioed villains who thronged this incredible production. If "Back to 1928!" is going to become the motto of producers of topical features, it will be increasingly difficult for enthusiasts like myself to defend radio-dramatic technique against the many sensible people who—on the whole, I believe, mistakenly—detest it. Programmes like *Maquis* are an insult to the subjects with which they pretend to deal.

Elizabeth Schumann, last Sunday evening, appeared to be singing more exquisitely than ever. I say "appeared," because I live in the West of England and that station unthinkably rejected this capital programme in favour of community hymn singing; and the reception on other wavelengths was deplorable. No doubt these sing-songs have a wide appeal; but we can have them whenever we choose, whereas I fear Miss Schumann is, in the nature of her case, rather more elusive. This was a particularly bad example of provincialism—dead against everything one had hoped for from the regions, and I should be surprised to learn that I was the only listener in the West who resented being virtually deprived of so rare a treat.

Recommendations:—*October 21st.* "Nelson and Sea Power to-day" (9.15 p.m.); César Franck: Prelude, Choral and Fugue (Jeanne-Marie Darré 11.3).

October 22nd. The Green Pastures (9.15 p.m.); Music of William Lawes (11.15).

October 23rd. Symphony Concert: Haydn and Dohnanyi (7.0).

October 24th. "Music of Our Time" (Symphony Concert, 7.45); "A Review of Gate Revues" (L.P. 7.10).

October 25th. Benjamin Britten: String Quartet (3.15).

October 26th. "The Problem of Palestine" (7.30); "Fishermen in Wartime" (8.0); *The Gioconda Smile* (10.0).

Edward Sackville West

WAR ARTISTS AND SCULPTORS

Though the War Artists' productions belong to the nation, it costs 2*s.* to see them at Burlington House—1*s.* entrance and 1*s.* for the catalogue—because the labels they used to have have been carefully removed. There are over a thousand exhibits, and so the spectator gets his moneysworth? Of course he does—though for my part I don't find sixteen rooms of War pictures more enjoyable than three. (Does anyone?) And I recommend the visitor to turn to the right on entering and to look at the most recent pictures (of the landings and the subsequent campaigns) before his eyes and spirits have become utterly shattered. If the final impression made by this show, which includes only one fifth of the works purchased, is saddening, the Committee responsible is in no way to blame. They have carried through surprisingly well a most admirable project: most of the pictures are better than one could expect (conspicuously better, for instance, than the average at the R.A. summer exhibitions), and some are remarkable. Here is both fine imaginative vision and vivid reporting. Pictures like those by Dame Laura Knight, Mr. W. T. Monnington and Mr. Meredith Frampton are few. The trouble is that, despite searchlights, burning churches, parachutes and similarly picturesque products, war is an odious and glum business nowadays, whatever it was in the times of Uccello, Leonardo and even Van der Meulen. Artists don't like war, and can't conceal the fact. Graham Sutherland, John Piper and Henry Moore succeed in making poetry out of disaster; Anthony

Gross, Eric Ravilious, Evelyn Dunbar, Edward Ardizzone, and above all, Edward Bawden, have detected charming or amusing subjects. William Coldstream has had the luck to see the Cathedral of Capua and to make it a " war-picture " by including some shadowy lorries in the foreground—a good picture this. Richard Eurich has been extraordinarily skilful in making dymanic panoramas of momentous occasions. But inevitably most of the works tend to dullness, and the more of them you look at, the duller they seem. The first six portraits by William Dring, for instance, seem quite pleasing, but long before I got to the forty-sixth I was praying I should never see another. Most of the portraits, indeed, are just depressing.

There are enjoyable works that I don't remember seeing before by Carol Weight, Ruskin Spear, Elsie Hewland, Leila Faithfull, and a hitherto unknown artist, Albert Richards, who parachuted into France on D-Day and made a number of paintings before he was killed. These, though hasty, reveal an uncommon talent of which we must mourn the loss. Leslie Cole's pictures of Belsen, literal statements of fact, are more ghastly than any Dance of Death invented by the fancy of the Middle Ages. The collection is wisely to be split up and the pictures most valuable as works of art will be available to the Tate. Thanks to the discrimination of the responsible committee, there will be enough, I should think, to fill two rooms.

With the support of the Arts Council the A.I.A. have organised an exhibition at Messrs. Heal's called " Sculpture in the Home." This consists of smallish works displayed on furniture and under drawings so as to show them to advantage and to encourage patrons. Almost all the best sculptors working in this country are represented, and also a few of the eminent dead, such as Rodin and Maillol. The effect is most agreeable, and some of the exhibits are not so alarming in price as sculpture usually has to be. (Notice, for instance, Karin Jonzen's *Daphne* at twenty-five guineas.) I insist upon the matter of price, because there can't be much sculpture in the home until it can be produced at a smaller cost to the artist. Is there no method of making modern terra-cottas in large quantities, like Tang and Tanagra figures?

ROGER MARVELL

A FINE HAMLET

THE Arts Theatre offers us *Hamlet*. Each member of a *Hamlet* cast has to submit his performance to comparison with the best we can remember, and the Arts Theatre has not the resources necessary to stand such comparisons. Why, oh, why, could they not give us the rare treat of one of the neglected plays, *Timon* or *Titus Andronicus* or *The Two Gentlemen*? Or, better still, a play by Ford or Fletcher or Ben Jonson? The answer, presumably, is that Mr. Alec Clunes wanted to play Hamlet; and rightly, for his performance is of the highest interest. He speaks beautifully, he has no tiresome mannerisms, he has a good appearance, he convinces us of the Prince's intelligence, and, above all, he has what some otherwise remarkable Hamlets lack, all the necessary charm. Hamlet is too civilised for his environment—that is his tragedy, and I have never seen this better brought out than by Mr. Clunes. On the other hand, he fails to rise to the graveyard scene, and simply throws away " This is I—Hamlet the Dane." He is, in fact, a very fine Hamlet, rather than a great one.

One subtle, effective and, I think, new piece of business deserves to become traditional. During the speech about " the purpose of playing ":

> " to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure "

Hamlet glances at the empty thrones, so that his criticism of actors becomes also a significant comment upon the trap he is laying. I do not know whether this brilliant notion must be attributed to Mr. Clunes or to Miss Judith Furse, the producer. Less happy innovations are Ophelia's presence during " To be or not to be," and a flibbertigibbet Polonius, who might be Osric grown old. (Partly as a result of this the wonderful scene with Reynaldo goes for nothing.) Also the Player Queen is presented as an utterly incompetent actor. (This is deliberate, for the boy who takes the part, Ramon Kilby, is excellent as the second gravedigger.) The boy-actors in Shakespeare's time must have been highly skilled, or he would not have written such stunning parts for them Why, then, wreck the play-scene by guying it?

Miss Olga Lindo as the Queen gave an admirably powerful performance. As a result she was slightly out of key with the rest of the production, which has the defects as well as the virtues of extreme restraint. Miss Dorothy Primrose as Ophelia, and Mr. Allan McLelland as Laertes, are good. The rest of the cast achieve speed and are, at worst, fairly inoffensive, but Miss Furse has not managed to get even a minimum of what is wanted from the important part of Fortinbras. The scenery is prettily painted. No connoisseur should miss the production; Mr. Clunes, known to be one of the best comedians in England, has proved also one of the best Hamlets.

SAM SMILES

THE MOVIES

"The Lost Week-end," at the Plaza
"The Road to Utopia," at the Carlton
"Over Twenty-one," at the New Gallery
"The Valley of Decision," at the Empire
"Channel Islanders," at the Tivoli

The Lost Week-End sent me on a search (fruitless, alas) for Mr. Charles Jackson's novel of that name. It isn't often one wants, after seeing a film, to read the novel it was taken from; for one thing it is likely to be the kind of novel that would appeal to a talent scout, and that is a kind better avoided by those who read. I am quite content, for example, in this week's batch to have sat in a chair while *The Valley of Decision* flickered past. Goodbye, Miss Garson, and mind your valleys.

But *The Lost Week-End* is another matter. This " diary of a dipsomaniac " offers an uncompromising portrait and suggests narrative of the order given to us by Simenon in a compulsive mood. Ruin, psychological necessity provide a fine framework for the writer tough as nails. How tough is Mr. Jackson? Impossible to determine without reading him, but I suspect a soft streak. That hero of his, for example, settling down after the D.T.'s to write a novel called *The Bottle*, and taking in his arms the girl who has been there all along. What has happened to the vicious circle, so cruelly and inescapably marked out? . . . But already we are off on the film, whose ending—an unpersuasive couple of minutes—seems comically tagged on. We don't, in fact, believe in the hero's reforming, since reformation is part of his usual cycle; then, why not admit as much and make the final tableau ironical? I can't believe that by box-office standards the happy ending comes off and certainly it fails by any other standard. Otherwise the character of the drunkard, amiable, disgusting, tricky, and self-absorbed, is presented without gloss: a remarkable study by Mr. Ray Milland, who wasn't at all, one would have supposed, the actor for this kind of thing. Probably his performance owes a good deal to the director, William Wyler. The camera shows a nice detachment,

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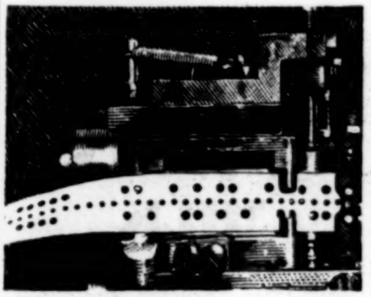

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verging on irony, from the very first sequence. A Clairish panorama of roofs narrows down to one window, from which a whisky bottle is hanging: inside everyone is looking behind bookshelves and under sofas while Mr. Milland, on the water-waggon, blandly protests his innocence. The high-lights, though, are in moments of imaginative ferocity, when the bender really gets under way and our maniac goes staggering across New York in the sunshine to pawn his typewriter or wakes up at night in the D.T. hospital—moments that raise the film above the sensational drabness inherent in such a theme. Here, true to the smallest detail, is the seamy side of antics that from W. C. Fields or Leon Errol would make us howl with laughter. *The Lost Week-End* provides a number of wry laughs, which disappear when the hero gets his screaming fit. The Hays Office apparently drew the line at alcoholic visions, and only one mouse is allowed to poke its head through the wall, but Mr. Milland's yells conjure up squads of mice. This is a frightening film, even, I should think, for teetotallers. That it should have been made and shown in America shows a considerable advance since the days of Prohibition.

Road to Utopia is the fourth and funniest of a series in which Bob Hope and Bing Crosby have developed a charmingly intimate line of cross-talk; Benchley, as interrupter, is an innovation. Of the others *Over* 21, with Irene Dunne and Charles Coburn, amuses intermittently about the horrors of passing army exams.; the servant girl at the Empire (Greer Garson) very properly marries the young master and would have done it a lot quicker if it hadn't been for melodrama; and last, a sketchy but genuine little piece by Crown Film Unit reminds us of Guernsey during the occupation.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

Correspondence

A CRIMEAN WAR FOREIGN POLICY?

SIR,—Mr. Bevin's statement on the breakdown of the Conference of Foreign Ministers was admirable in tone, but did not cast much light on the real causes for this major defeat in the first battle of the campaign to win the peace. So far as the Labour Government are concerned, the choice, now thrust upon them, is whether they wish to go on trying to apply the foreign policy they inherited from their Conservative predecessors, or whether the time has not come to apply Labour's own foreign policy, at the cost of departing from national unity with the Tories, and from that continuity which is so dear to the Foreign Office, because it means that it is in fact they and not the responsible Minister who run our foreign affairs.

The Government's policy so far shows little signs of an attempt to apply the Party's declared policies. In the Far East we have acquiesced in the American claim to turn the Pacific into an American lake by acquiring strategic bases in captured enemy territories, as well as by leasing bases in British territory. We have not challenged the State Department's claim to treat Japan as a matter of exclusive American concern. In return we appear to be securing American support for treating the Mediterranean and the Near and Middle East as a matter of exclusive British concern. The bargain also appears to include some American support for our crusade for "democracy" in Bulgaria and Rumania. This contrasts so oddly with this country's protection of a reactionary tyranny in Greece and refusal to get tough with Franco's obscene dictatorship in Spain. It also seems curious that we are prepared for a breach with the powerful Soviet Union about the difference between our conception of democracy in Greece and their version of democracy in the rest of the Balkans, whereas the Government plead that they cannot afford to offend the ramshackle Arab Federation for the sake of carrying out our obligations to the Jews, although the Labour Party gave specific pledges to the electorate on this issue.

Labour's policy statement, *The International Post-War Settlement*, calls for the formation of an international force under the direction of the Security Council, and says that "the leasing of air and naval bases in the territories of other States is a step in the right direction. Our leases to the U.S.A. are due to be continued and both we and the Russians should have bases on the Continent of Europe both in enemy, and by agreement with our friends, in Allied territory. It would be best if all these bases were to be held on behalf of the United Nations."

If we apply that policy to the Far East, we must associate ourselves with the Russian demand for inter-Allied control of Japan and we must ask for a system of United Nations air and naval bases in captured Japanese territories. If we apply it to the Near and Middle East we should press for a revision of the Montreux Convention and of the International Conventions governing traffic through the Suez Canal and the status of Tangier, so as to make the Security Council of the United Nations directly responsible for guaranteeing freedom of passage between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean and between the Mediterranean and the Indian and Atlantic Oceans, for all States loyal to their obligations under the Charter.

As for Eastern Europe, we are faced with the plain fact that this war has released the second wave of the social revolution that followed the first wave in Russia after the first world war. As the *Manchester Guardian* pointed out long ago, the Resistance Movements are the continuation throughout Europe of the Russian Revolution. We cannot unite, reconstruct and pacify Europe, nor co-operate with the Soviet Union for this purpose, except on the basis of understanding and friendship for the Resistance Movements, in which the Communists play a great part, particularly in Eastern Europe, and the social forces they represent. This means applying in practice the Labour Party's statement in the *International Post-War Settlement* that Socialism is a fundamental necessity to the attainment of our international aims, including the promotion of the spread of democracy and political freedom throughout Europe. It also means acting on the statement in the National Executive's Resolution approved last Whitsun, that the free communities of the future will grow out of the wartime Resistance Movements.

That means recognising the present Austrian, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Rumanian and Yugoslav Governments without further ado. Until we recognise them we cut ourselves off from any share in or even knowledge of Eastern Europe. Once we have recognised them we can exert some influence on them, discuss with them, press our claims for stationing journalists in them, and generally incorporate them in the life of Europe. Above all, if we want the Russians to trust us we must take the risk of trusting them. The Americans have declared that Great Britain and Canada share the industrial secret of manufacturing the atom bomb. We must insist upon our moral right and political duty to pass on what we know to the Russians, whether the Americans like it or not, in exchange for the Russians agreeing to set up an international team of scientists under the control of the Security Council to work on the peace-time applications of atomic power.

House of Commons. K. ZILLIACUS

THE PLIGHT OF THE SUDETENS

SIR,—In a broadcast on Sunday, Dr. Benes attempted to justify the expulsion of the German and Hungarian populations from Czechoslovakia and gave his word that they are being treated with "humanity." I have had the opportunity to test this assurance, by questioning two sober and manifestly honest witnesses who saw the conditions prevailing in September. One of them fought on our side throughout the war;

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the other is a British subject; both have near relatives among Sudeten anti-Nazis who are staunch Socialists. The facts they gave me, independently, tallied and the broad outlines are hardly capable of dispute.

What is planned is not merely expulsion, but robbery on a colossal scale. The German peasants have been expropriated without compensation and deprived of land which their families had often owned for centuries, together with their cattle and equipment. At present they are serving the new Czech owners as labourers. In the towns the process of expulsion, which one of my informants witnessed in Karlsbad, is as summary as possible. A quarter is cordoned off and all the German inhabitants have to leave their homes within half-an-hour. Of their possessions they may take only what they can carry: even the bedclothes had to be left behind. The men from this town were sent to a concentration camp, where they were set to work in the coalmines.

The general rule of Czech behaviour is to treat the native German population as the Nazis treated the Jews. Every German who cannot prove that he was actively anti-Nazi must wear a white arm-band. The privileged few who can pass severe and repeated examination into their records, receive red arm-bands. They are warned that if they are allowed to remain in the country, they and their children will lose their former language rights. All German books have to be surrendered. Germans are forbidden to use the railways, to enter theatres, cinemas and swimming pools, or to sit on the benches in parks. Germans may not use the post, and their letters are returned to them undelivered.

The economic policy, pending expulsion, is one of semi-starvation. A Czech may change 100 Reichsmarks (the former currency) into 1,000 kronen every month. A German is allowed to change only 30 marks (300 kronen) and on this sum, worth roughly £2, he must live for a month. Germans are severely rationed and may buy neither meat, milk nor vegetables: even their children get no milk. Only bread and potatoes are available. There is, speaking generally, no food shortage; there are punitive measures.

Neither of my informants had personally seen the concentration camps in which Germans are being gradually collected. But through relatives a good deal was known. Thus, in the auditorium of a cinema with 150 seats, 700 Germans were interned, without beds, washing facilities or medical attention. The diet in some of these camps seems to be that of the Nazi death-camps, watery soup once a day, sometimes with bread, sometimes without it.

These are the broad facts. I refrain from quoting exceptional cases of atrocity, though one of my informants was in Aussig during the pogrom at neighbouring Schonpriesen, when 72 men were shot on the bridge and thrown into the river. Both of my informants (neither of them Jewish) spoke of the prevailing anti-Semitism. All this is, of course, a retaliation for years of oppression, exploitation and humiliation. Let it be called, then, indiscriminate vengeance. Not even a Czech chauvinist, let alone Dr. Benes, could mistake it for "humanity." The worst news in his broadcast was that the British Government has sanctioned the barbarous policy of expatriation. If, as we may hope, the actual expulsion of between two and three million Sudeten Germans is postponed till the winter is over, some enquiry should be held into the conditions under which this doomed population must exist meanwhile.

H. N. BRAILSFORD

HAMPSTEAD'S ALIENS

SIR,—It is reported in the press that Flight-Lieut. Challen, Hampstead's M.P., has given his support to a petition organised by two local women and signed by 3,000 persons urging the expulsion of foreigners from the district "to help ease the housing shortage."

Many retorts spring to the mind: housing, one thought, was a national problem, and should have been solved by the party Flight-Lieutenant Challen represents, during its long tenure of office. Or perhaps by the Borough Council, many members of which, we are told, have signed the petition; certainly not by the refugees.

Again, this using of foreigners, mostly known to be Jewish refugees from Nazi oppression, as a scapegoat has an old and sinister ring. It was Hitler who said:—

> My Jews are a valuable hostage given me by the democracies. Anti-Semitic propaganda in all countries is an almost indispensable medium for the extension of our political campaign. You will see how little time we shall need in order to upset the ideas and criteria of the whole world, simply and purely by attacking Judaism.

Hitler may be dead, but the poisonous leaven he brewed seems to be still at work.

80, Antrim Mansions,
Hampstead, N.W.3.

EILEEN LEACH

R.A.F. DEMOB.

SIR,—The Labour Government are still seriously damaging their prestige amongst the Armed Forces by displaying a lack of imagination. Mr. Isaacs' first statement on demobilisation caused general consternation. His amended scheme represents a big speed-up for the Navy, a fairly good increase for the Army, but a big slow-down for the R.A.F., yet not a word of explanation has, so far as I can gather, been given to the members of that unfortunate service.

Prior to Mr. Isaacs' last broadcast, the position in the R.A.F. was that 23 groups were to be released by the end of the year, 24 in some trades and 25 in a few others. The sensational speed-up now announced is the release of Group 24 by the end of the year and a start to be made on Group 25, and in the first six months of next year, when the speed-up has presumably got fully under way, the release of another three groups.

It is difficult to conceive of an adequate reason for such unfair discrimination against the R.A.F., which by next June is to lag 18 groups behind the Navy and four behind the Army, but if such a reason exists every effort should have been made to explain it to the R.A.F., and a pledge given that everything possible would be done to bring the R.A.F. into line with the other services as soon as possible.

In the circumstances the rapturous comments of the British press, given to us on the radio, have been received here with indignation.

L. A. C.

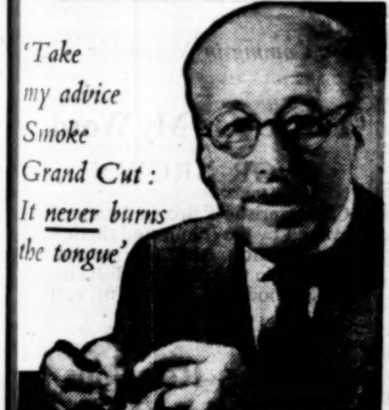
R.A.F., Khartoum.

HEARING AIDS

SIR,—We have noted with interest H. P. Garwood's letter on the price of Hearing Aids, and would respectfully point out that his figures are not altogether accurate when applied to this organisation whose highest priced Aid—a Pocket Valve Aid—is actually sold at 30 gns., and not £25 which was the top price suggested with regard to certain firms. This Aid is to-day being sold *at a loss* so that had we no other interests—sister companies working on purely commercial lines—we could not carry on at all.

The solution of the problem has nothing whatever to do with organisation, factory space or design, or even the size of the market as compared with America for we can and do increase the market with representatives and agents abroad. We have designs and prototypes of Pocket Valve Aids, Bone Conductors, Miniature Receivers with orifice fittings, Medium Earpieces and every conceivable accessory. The tools are mostly made. It is now simply a matter of materials and skilled labour.

At present materials are not so abundant that it would be economically prudent for any firm that hopes to survive to set a large production line in, motion. We ourselves hope to be in a position to commence large scale production, viz.: 10,000 Aids to start with, at Guildford in February of next year. With the co-operation of the various Ministries concerned nothing can prevent an even flow of first-class Hearing Aids, well within the reach of everybody.



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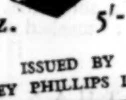

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coming off our lines by May. Let it not be forgotten, however, that we are quite ready and anxious to start to-day could we obtain but a measure of the kind of Ministerial co-operation that has been so liberally granted to us in our sister companies working on contracts deemed to be of more direct value to society.

With regard to W. L. Goodman's letter in your issue of October 13th, if we may say so, he has rather over-simplified the matter; for he has only mentioned one cost—the material cost of a small L.F. amplifier and a radio earpiece. Incidentally, such an amplifier and such an earpiece would have very little market value when compared with what can and is being done. He has allowed nothing for buying and maintaining a factory; nothing for the wages of skilled designers (which are anywhere between £12 and £20 a week), nothing for toolmakers, foremen, assembly staff; nothing for advertising which costs the same for an article sold to a limited market as it does for something which has a universal appeal; nothing for constructing Sound-Proof Rooms, Audiometers, Intelligibility Indicators, Hearing Aid Calibrators; nothing for the maintaining of Consulting Bureau, a School for Auricians and a large Service Organisation. With regard to indispensable accessories, designing and tooling-up of miniature Orifice Fitting Earpieces and Bone Conductors is a highly skilled job. Mr. Goodman, with all the good will in the world, could not make these things, even samples, certainly not quantities, without a large and, unhappily, a very expensive organisation behind him. Manufacturing, fitting and supplying a modern Hearing Aid is a very serious responsibility indeed. It is quite wrong to believe that a Hearing Aid can be sold over the counter. Even if at one time this were possible, in future it will be quite out of the question. Each client will have to be treated individually, the hearing carefully tested and an Aid made up to suit the particular form and degree of deafness. Fitting Hearing Aids in much the same way as spectacles are fitted to-day, is definitely a practical possibility. It is a specialist's job. A Sound-Proof room is indispensable. It cannot be done in a chemist's or wireless shop.

GORDON DENT

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NURSING

SIR,—Above all the factors leading to the shortage of nurses, surely the most important is the intransigent attitude of the hospital authorities? The treatment of the nurses is little different from that of schoolgirls, a discipline which is not accepted by young women in any other occupation. Few people outside these hospitals realise the severity of the system. They tend to dismiss complaints as exaggerated "grouses" unless specific instances are quoted. For this reason, sir, I would like to mention the following case which has recently come to my notice and fully illustrates the point.

A nurse at a large voluntary hospital had been given permission to sleep away from the hospital for the night but missed her train and had to return. Arriving at 12.30 a.m. and dreading the long explanation which would be demanded by the unsympathetic authorities, she got back to her own room by means of the fire escape. This was discovered. On being questioned she admitted the "crime" and, realising that discipline had to be maintained, was prepared for punishment, even though it was her first offence. To her amazement she was given a month's notice without the references so necessary for her career and without which further training was impossible. She was, however, allowed to complete the Final State Nursing Exam. which she was then taking. Schoolboys are punished but not expelled for climbing in. A few days later the fire escape was obstructed by barbed wire!

Does this encourage girls to take up nursing?

FENESTRA

MAIL TO GERMANY

SIR,—It is reported that German prisoners of war in this country are now to be allowed to send printed "field" postcards to their relatives in the British, American and French zones of Germany, who have had no news of them since V E-day and in many cases cannot know that they are prisoners. Presumably the relatives will be allowed to reply in the same manner. So end six months of torturing suspense for both sides, but particularly for the prisoners who, in addition to the hardships of captivity, had no means of knowing whether their loved ones had survived the last heavy bombings and the invasion.

Could not this privilege, however, be extended to the few thousands of civilians, refugees and others, who have relatives in Germany and who are also in an agony of uncertainty as to their fate? If transport is the difficulty, communication could be rationed at first to a limited number of postcards. But since there is now happily no longer any reason for censorship, it is difficult to see why permission should be limited to printed postcards. Postcards covered with writing weigh no more.

SCOTT BAYLISS

BELSEN

SIR,—I have received a letter from a sixteeen-year old boy who was in the Belsen concentration camp for some years; it throws an interesting sidelight on the Palestinian question. Some examples of his experiences will serve to indicate the magnitude of the task of rehabilitating such children. The tone in which the prisoners were addressed was like this (I shall not attempt translation): "Sie, kommen Se mal her, Sie Arschloch, ins Schukommando!" and so on. He writes that two men were hanged for allegedly cutting up a corpse and eating the flesh. His father and two brothers did not survive, and he himself has only just recovered from typhus. His style is that of a ten-year-old child.

The chances of physical and psychological rehabilitation in a starving Europe that is daily growing more and more anti-Semitic are very slight indeed for thousands of such concentration camp children. They will indeed be the first to succumb in the coming winter famine. The ridiculous fact is that the Nazis starved them because they were Jews and their British liberators let them starve because they are "Germans." It is obvious that Palestinian Jews will do everything to prevent the enactment of this tragi-comedy. The situation should make every conscientious Englishman blush. Unfortunately, conscientious Englishmen seem to be as rare as conscientious Germans.

16, Mountfield Road,
London, N.3.

JOACHIM M. WOLFF

SPANISH-ANTI-FASCISTS

SIR,—I should like to bring up again the case of the 226 Spanish anti-Fascists interned at Chorley. It is not suggested that the conditions they are living under are bad, but they have been shut up in one internment camp after another since 1939, and they want their freedom. The Chamberlain Government did not intern the Spanish refugees who came here in 1939, yet a Labour Government keeps these men under lock and key in spite of their having, many of them, belonged to the French Resistance Movement. What reason can there possibly be for not releasing them at once and allowing them to find work until conditions in Spain permit of their return there? The fact that 70 of them want to go to France because they have families there is surely no justification for detaining the other 156 who want to remain in this country,

Meanwhile these men are very bored. Gifts of French and Spanish books, of coffee and of postage stamps will be welcome. They should be sent to Gregorio Segura, Hall on the Hill Camp, Heath Charnock, near Chorley, Lancs.

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JONATHAN CAPE

BOOKS IN GENERAL

Whatever may be written, in days to come, about or against this " warlike, various and tragical age "—prophetic description of it by Abraham Cowley—it surely will not be said that it lacked poets. Such an age, Cowley supposed, must be " best to write of, but worst to write in " : words quoted in the introduction to the late Harold Monro's selection from *Twentieth Century Poetry*, published in 1929. Obviously, lamentably, wars kill off poets and are therefore, for these victims, ill to write in—Sidney Keyes, Alun Lewis, John Gillespie Magee, Julian Bell, John Cornford in this latest, or in the Spanish, war ; Rupert Brooke, Wilfrid Owen, Edward Thomas, Julian Grenfell, Francis Ledwidge, Charles Sorley between 1914 and 1918. Several of these went on writing till nearly the end. Meanwhile, their elders, and those of their contemporaries who survived, continued publishing indefatigably ; soon to be reinforced by dozens of novices. The *Concise Cambridge History of English Literature* reminds us that *The Chapbook* for June, 1920, contained a list of those who had published volumes of verse between January, 1912, and May, 1920, and that this recorded over a thousand names. Monro read or reread " about 600 volumes " for his anthology.

Sixteen years pass, and now in 1945 appears another comprehensive collection, *Poems of Our Time* (Dent, 3s.), chosen by Richard Church and M. M. Bozman. The editors give nearly four hundred poems, representing the work of about a hundred and thirty poets, many of whom were unknown to Monro ; for a new host has arisen since he died in 1932. It may be presumed that scores of writers of " new verse " over " new signatures " will emerge, under other editors, during the next decade ; that is, if there is anybody left to write, read, select and publish, as this progressively atomic century staggers on its " warlike and tragical way."

It is hard to account for this formidable multitude of witnesses.

No doubt weary critics, hard-tasked in the effort to classify and discriminate, will explain that, though we may have a thousand-and-one poets, we have very little poetry ; that little will survive out of this mass-production. They always say that ; and usually posterity confirms them. But we might persuade them to admit that the average quality of contemporary verse is at least more *interesting* than that, say, of the " minors " of the Victorian age, when so many bards struck the lyre or the harp, aspired to " deathless ditties " and proclaimed themselves " the music-makers " and the professional " dreamers of dreams." Perhaps no verse in our literature is so embarrassing as that of the second-rate Victorians, as it may be skimmed in charmingly illustrated and richly-gilt gift volumes of poetic gems. Many modernist poets perplex and irritate. We cannot feel them, as A. E. Housman said that he felt " pure " poetry, in the pit of the stomach ; William Morris having said the same thing long before Housman. But neither do we feel abashed, humiliated ; and as though, without excuse, we had burst into tears in a public place. If, like Coleridge, our poets record dreams, or are influenced by them, they know that, not opium, but Freud, Jung and Adler will account for them. They are not music-makers, or " tuneful " in the old-fashioned manner. They do not sing. Few write recognisable lyrics. But many of them have brains, and do not allow us to forget it. A few, like Mr. Louis MacNeice, and the faithful imagist "H. D." (ignored by Mr. Church and Mr. Bozman) have scholarship also. None of them wants to seem silly, so they become secretive. Intensely self-conscious, they are not openly giving themselves away.

The latest anthology is, however, by no means exclusively modernist. It has the advertisement of an almost academic prestige, derived from its inclusion in Everyman's Library ; and Everyman will expect, within the restricted space of some three hundred pages, a widely representative collection ; not one prompted by prejudice in favour of any particular movement, school or technical theory of modern English verse ; for coteries alarm him. Mr. John Cowper Powys, a poet long ago, and always poetic in his prose, has recently renewed the old distinction between " sophisticated modern verse " and " poetical popular poetry," and no doubt Everyman, whose lanky leg has so often been pulled by the sophisticated, will find emotional satisfaction in some of the simple old favourites reprinted here. He is not indeed invited, once more, to " arise and go now " with the youthful Yeats, but can meet him and his love down by the Salley Gardens ; he is called (very properly, but perhaps for the hundredth time) to realise, with Laurence Binyon, that he will grow old as the fallen in war do not ; he is obliged, with Rupert Brooke, to praise God because a big war has begun, and to " think only this " of him . . . Everyman will remember the rest. And if he is a little confused by the juxtaposition of divergent styles, popular and sophisticated, old and new, transparent and obscure, he must accept the editorial plan which was to divide their period into four fairly obvious " waves," each of which, they claim, has " an organic unity " : the years between 1900–1914 ; the war years of 1914 to 1918 ; the years between the two world wars ; those between 1930 and 1942. Meanwhile, their page-headlines, within each section, group the poems, loosely and sometimes rather capriciously, according to the moods and themes of the poets cited. Thus the *general* arrangement is chronological ; the work of each poet who lived through one or more of the " waves " is not " lumped together at the beginning, middle or end of the collection," but scattered throughout : he has to be pursued as a developing creature, " strengthening his music as the years feed him." In the " sheer and simple process of survival " long-lived poets—Hardy, Binyon, Yeats—gain slightly in impressiveness by this method, so long as they are able to absorb nourishment from the years, and do not starve themselves into a senile monotony of self-repetition. It is true that their respective developments could be shown, equally, were their poems to be " lumped together," dated, from youth to age. But then we should not see them in their poetic environment, with the hungry generations about them of those who imitated them, or rebelled against them, or simply forgot that they existed.

Floating across sequent waves, then, Everyman had better be advised to read this book right through, as it is evidently designed to be read. He will thus be able—possibly—to find " organic unity " in the disparate. But I am not sure that it would not be well for him to skip the Foreword and the Editor's Note on the dust-wrapper. These might frighten him by their exalted claims for the function, importance and *power* of poetry in the Twentieth Century.

Mr. Church, himself an accepted poet, is on almost mystical terms of intimacy with Time. He seems to know more than Everyman can be expected to know, about that enigmatic essence—the " shadow," as Wordsworth called it. He knows (what many doubt) that Time is an artist and a critic too ; that it " loves to make a pattern of the universe and of the fate of men." He therefore invokes Time's aid, without wondering, apparently, whether it has any taste, and whether it cares, in its addiction to the making of patterns, crazy or precise, to instruct its disciples in the art of knowing a good poem from a bad one. There are many bad poems in this book : either old ones like the blatant *Lepanto* of G. K. Chesterton—nearly five pages given to this—and a bad translation by Herbert Trench of a sensational poem by Jean Richepin ; or else new productions by young poets (or persons) who are evidently not ripe for discovery ; but whose names I prefer not to mention, after their blushing début under the protection of Mr. Church, in case I may be condemning incipient genius which Time may be ready to weave into future " patterns "—that word-of-all-work, now frequently thrust at us in the criticism of all the arts. Mr. Church uses it three times in his brief Foreword. I wish it could be given a long holiday ; but I must suggest to Mr. Church that if, as he thinks, Time loves to make patterns, history also must make them. What are they ? One of the most modest of this century's historians, Herbert Fisher, writing the " warlike, various and tragical " story that runs from the Neolithic age to Mussolini and Hitler, remarks :—

> Men wiser and more learned than I have discerned in history a plot, a rhythm, a predetermined pattern. These harmonies are concealed from me.

I suppose they are concealed also from Everyman, and that is why I advise him to desist from pattern-weaving and to judge each poem entirely according to its merit. For each poet, according to Mr. Church, is here " in his own absolute right " ; and not as a patch, and occasionally a bad patch, in a pattern.

By what absolute right a good many of the poets are here, I cannot tell, nor by what relative wrong a dozen or more well-known names are excluded. A long alphabet of absentees could be composed, from Symons (Arthur) to Sitwell (Sacheverell)—to take one initial letter only. But I will not indulge, this time, in the rather tedious sport of pushing out some poets and putting in others, so as to form an alternative anthology of my own. While regretting the rejected, one must try to believe in the absolute right of the editors' personal preferences ; the main criticism being (as I suggested) that plenty of space could have been reserved for the famous, if nonentities had not received such a generous allowance.

As, for example, with Robert Bridges.

Two poems only are given from him. Will Everyman think that the author of *The Testament of Beauty* was starving in these years ? What of the volume of 1925, from which *Cheddar Pinks* only is chosen ; the fine *Melancholy*, with several others, being neglected ? These, in fact, were the years during which the Laureate was beginning to be widely known—at last. Judging by this collection, Everyman must wonder why. The same criticism applies to the dull selection from Housman ; and, although Walter de la Mare appears with thirteen poems, we get little of the weird charm shown in such fancies as *Miss Loo*, *Rachel*, *Alone*, from *The Listeners ; Miss T.* and *Tired Tim* from *Peacock Pie*. It is time to assert that these two exquisite volumes are not exclusively dedicated to children, any more than are the two *Alices*, in which the grown-ups and the aged never cease to rejoice till they die.

These names are eminent. One, the most eminent, remains. For surely the greatest poet who wrote, during nearly the whole of this period, was W. B. Yeats. In 1900 he had just published *The Wind Among the Reeds* (1899), from which the editors print one poem, *The Heart of the Woman ;* missing what Yeats himself considered to be his most significant poem of that period, *The Cap and Bells ;* together with such delightful pieces as *Into the Twilight*, *The Moods*, and *Hanrahan Reproves the Curlew*. But this little book belongs, by a year, to a period before the editor's chronological limit. From Yeats's next collection, of 1906, they could have shown him as he was at his best, from 1900 to 1914, by taking such infinitely finer things as *In the Seven Woods*, *Adam's Curse*, and that charming pre-Raphaelite poem, *The Players ask for a Blessing*. Instead of that, they have inexplicably ransacked the collective editions of 1899, and the preceding white-covered volume of 1895, and have exhumed such childlike poems as *A Faery Song* and the *Salley Gardens ;* and, for one example, *The Stolen Child*, they have even gone back to *The Wanderings of Oisin*, Yeats's first collection of 1889 !

Here they have broken their own rules. And if they do this with Yeats why should they not go back also for Bridges and show Everyman that *he* could write lyrics ; or even to the Kipling of *The Seven Seas*, and the Hardy of *Wessex Poems ?*

I imagine that why the editors deal thus with the early Yeats, why, even with the later poet, they miss such masterpieces as *The Second*

Coming, *The Tower*, and others, is that they prefer a *quiet* poetry that does not unduly disturb. They like the grave and the graceful. They may like even prettiness, in an age of organised horror. This (apart from war poems) appears to be their main unifying thread or "pattern." I present them with another.

It is discoverable in the vital inspiration given to English poets by the loveliness of the English landscape. That influence can be traced even upon the sophisticated and artificial. When it does not directly prompt a theme, it supplies fragments of decoration, chance allusions and a background for emotion. Here, from the first poem, in which Thomas Hardy surveys the wintry scene, at the turn of the century, and hears "the darkling thrush" in his "full-hearted evensong," to the last, in which Laurence Binyon watches the burning of the leaves in autumn, with thoughts of the leaf and the flower to arise "from squalor of rottenness," the sights and sounds of rural life recur as a special native inspiration. It is so still in 1945, as it has been ever since Chaucer took delight from the humble daisies, those "floures whyte and rede." How much longer will it be so?

That landscape, that countryside, is almost certainly doomed. The machines must in time complete the work of defacement and destruction begun, and carried so far, in the first half of this century. Will the poets, like Antæus, fade into feebleness when they can no longer touch Mother Earth? Perhaps (after Kipling) they will achieve ecstasies in the contemplation of juggernaut-jeeps, in place of trees; cone-clutches, collets and hacksaws, in place of blossoms, meadows and streams; comparators and sintering slugs in place of birds and silver fish. For modern poets are adaptable, and, as I have said, indefatigable. But I sincerely sympathise with those who still like the moon better than a searchlight, and prefer to seek their "patterns" in the flowers of the field, rather than in the entrails of a motor-coach under repair.

RICHARD JENNINGS

A HEADMASTER

A Forgotten Genius: Sewell of St. Columba's and Radley. By LIONEL JAMES. *Faber.* 12s.

William Sewell, 1804-1874, has claims to a place beside Thomas Arnold and Edward Thring as a reformer of the English Public School. A Fellow of Exeter, moreover, and Professor of Moral Philosophy, he was concerned in the Oxford Movement. He knew many of his most eminent contemporaries, and wrote voluminous reminiscences, still unpublished. How fortunate the biographer who finds such material at his disposal! Unfortunately, Mr. James has entered upon his task, he explains, in the hope of persuading readers of "the incalculable value to this country, and to the world at large" of the Public Schools. And though he is most conscientious in quoting the many disparaging remarks made about his hero by his contemporaries, the tone of the book is unduly hagiographical.

A boundless energy that led Sewell to dissipate his powers, an optimism that blinded him alike to material difficulties and to his own limitations, a self-dedication that went with an entire lack of humour, a profound piety that encouraged him to treat those who disagreed with him as enemies of the truth—such were the inseparable virtues and defects of a man typically Victorian, even in his eccentricities. The punning nickname of Suillus, the little pig, was given him by Whateley, because he would never "go the whole hog." This is true only of his Anglicanism. He wrote a pamphlet against Tract 90, and was no less opposed to ritualism than to habitual confession. He condemned what he called "ecclesiastical millinery" as un-English: "We do not like ornamentation, especially the ornamentation of men. We do not think it manly"—a cruel, if unintended, reflection upon Judges, Doctors of Divinity and Guardsmen. At the same time he was a fervent High Churchman. He was indignant with Mr. Gladstone for supporting University Reform. He delivered a sermon against the proposal to erect a Museum in Oxford. He obliged the unhappy urchins at Radley to attend the full services of Morning and Evening Prayer every day.

With three Irish friends, High Churchmen like himself, Sewell founded St. Columba's, a school intended to be an Irish Winchester. He was not the Headmaster, though he was chiefly responsible for the system. The curriculum included not only music, dancing, French and fencing, but Irish, for Sewell thought that only a gentry able to speak Irish could deflect the populace from their devotion to Romish errors. Grace at meals was therefore said in Irish. What further steps were taken to teach the language, and with what success, it is difficult to discover. Sewell's connection with the school did not last long: there was a difference of opinion about Fasting.

For a while he found distraction in composing a novel. But the desire to realise his ideal of a Public School remained imperious. And in 1847, Radley College was opened with three boys. Sewell was the founder, though he did not become its Head until six years later. His aim, at Radley as at St. Columba's, was to preserve the "manliness and freedom" of the Traditional Public School, and at the same time to secure the boys against the perils to which such necessary freedom is exposed. He wished them to live "as in the bosom of one large Christian family." Sewell himself had no family: he never married, a fact he attributed to an early and unsuccessful affection for a young lady he met at Cowes. While the boys were to regard the Masters as parents or friendly uncles, these were to be elevated to the rank of Fellows, and the Head was to possess only the primacy of a Warden. The bosom of a Christian family, we may notice, was furnished with a cane. "To this hour," Sewell declared eleven years after leaving Radley, "to this hour some of the most delightful, touching, blessed associations I have are connected with the Whipping Room at Radley." It is fair to add that there seems to have been less flogging there than in most schools of the time.

"I never liked boys as boys," Sewell admitted, and again, "I was never made for a Headmaster; but I had the Prayer Book to guide me." He certainly had great power over the boys, indeed commanded their affections. Here is a quotation from one of his school sermons:

> I intend soon, my boys, some day when you are unprepared, and when you least expect it, to deprive you of some indulgence, some liberty, something you are in the habit of considering a privilege, almost a right. . . You recollect, some of you, that I did this—something of the kind—one day last term. I prohibited that which is one of your greatest enjoyments—your going down to bathe. And I told you that I had no reason for it, except to exercise you in obedience . .

Despite such novel exercises, Sewell never succeeded in attracting more than 156 boys to Radley. An extravagant expenditure landed the foundation in desperate debt: the creditor, a Mr. Hubbard, saved the school, but Sewell had to resign. He retired to the Continent, where he lived on a pittance, translating Homer and the Psalms into English verse.

The quotations from his Reminiscences excite curiosity. Sewell knew Swinburne as a child, and thought he was suffering from too effusive and excitable a mother. A mother, he declared,

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ROUTLEDGE

ought to be very sparing of expressions of affection. Little Algernon was shy: "I believed that Radley was the only place for him, that Eton would be his ruin. I could shelter him in Radley, lead him on gently to manliness of character." Later, Swinburne would come from Oxford to Radley, but "the Sarcastic Spirit was strong upon him" and Sewell warned him not to return.

> We parted kindly. I told him if he was ever unhappy, and I could be of the least use to him to remember that he had a friend who would never forget him. But whether such an occasion will ever arrive I know not. Poor Fellow. He is living, I understand, with a family of the name of Rossetti, literary people in London.

Though Mr. James's book is inspired largely by piety towards Radley, he leaves us uncertain how far Sewell's particular notions still prevail there. In some of these he was certainly ahead of his times. He denounced the system which degrades house-masters into caterers who make a profit upon the boys' food. And one of the causes of the financial collapse was his reckless purchase of fine silver and furniture: "We are to educate gentlemen; a gentleman is a Christian refined, and mankind cannot be refined without the arts."

Sewell has been dogged by misfortune. He lost all control over the two schools he had founded. He was oddly unpopular with most of his contemporaries: Newman, Lockhart, Tuckwell and Tom Mozley have left records of their dislike or distrust. Even the D.N.B., it seems, traduces him. And it is to be feared that this biography, interesting as it is, will antagonise some readers by its too open advocacy. Sewell was unpractical, prejudiced, even silly—such at least is the impression with which I am left; but he deserves respect for his enthusiasm, his disinterestedness and his ideal of ruling schoolboys otherwise than by fear.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

SOCIALISTS ALL

Beatrice Webb. By MARGARET COLE. *Longmans.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

In Search of the Millennium. By JULIUS BRAUNTHAL. With an Introduction by H. N. BRAILSFORD. *Gollancz.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

It was characteristic of the early Fabian Society to declare to an international Conference of Socialists that it

> endeavours to pursue its Socialist and Democratic objects with complete singleness of aim. For example:
>
> It has no distinctive opinions on the Marriage Question, Religion, Art, Abstract Economics, Historic Evolution, Currency, or any other subject than its own special business of practical Democracy and Socialism (Tract 70).

A very practical and very British affair this child of the Webbs and Shaw. An affair of drains and Trade Boards and Minority Reports, of patient research and polite penetration; a matter of statistics, of "measurement and publicity"; a revolt against the prophetic comprehensiveness of Marx, the Utopian rhetoric of nineteenth century British Socialism and the vague reformism of the Liberal Party.

From the time when she met Sidney Webb to the date when she despaired of the Labour Party—somewhere about 1930—Mrs. Webb devoted her entire life to achieving a limited and precise series of political and economic changes. Like Shaw, she was a Socialist because she was convinced on rational grounds that Capitalism was silly and inefficient. She did not "love the poor": again like Shaw, she wanted to abolish them. She came from an upper middle-class home where she had freedom to study and the chance of meeting the political leaders of the day. She might have married Joseph Chamberlain. Mrs. Cole, in her discerning and very readable study, assumes that if this remarkable marriage had taken place Chamberlain would have still made his transition from radicalism to imperialism, and that the result would have been tragic for Mrs. Webb. Those who like the game of historical might-have-beens may speculate on the possibility that under Mrs. Webb's influence Chamberlain would have forestalled Lloyd George as a great radical leader. Whether in that case Mrs. Webb would have achieved as much as she did in partnership with Sidney Webb is another matter.

The Webbian union was astonishingly fruitful—fruitful in ideas, in its effect on British Labour and on the British middle-class. Mrs. Cole rightly emphasises that the most uncommon quality of the Webbs was their complete "disinterestedness." Not that Mrs. Webb was above human weakness. Mrs. Cole well understands Mrs. Webb's failings—her tendency to "boss," for instance, and the intolerance which, as a supremely able and successful person, she could not always help displaying towards failure and muddle-headedness. Again Mrs. Cole is right in pointing out that the Webbs never fully appreciated the irrational and emotional forces in society. They failed to relate the progress of the British Labour movement with the ups and downs of the Socialist struggle on the Continent. Mrs. Webb never became at all cosmopolitan; she was a superb specimen of the British upper-class who turned to Socialism out of contempt for the slovenly, irresponsible and selfish behaviour of those whose duty it was to run England.

Rationalism had its Nemesis. Unlike Sidney Webb, Beatrice was always troubled by religious difficulties. She was one of the few agnostics who retained, as we should all be wise to do, the habit of prayer, even if it only means the conscious effort regularly to recall one's own highest purposes. But her craving for a religion in which she could lose herself, was only finally satisfied when she visited the U.S.S.R. The new Webbian faith was magnificently set out in *Soviet Communism*, the last of their great joint productions. As Mrs. Webb herself said, she "fell in love" with Soviet Russia. Though faith was bolstered up with the usual impressive mass of facts and statistics, it was faith of a new kind. Once Mrs. Webb had been disdainful of Soviet Communism, regarding it as a romantic effort to do everything at once; it broke the rules of Tract 70, for it dealt not only with Socialism, but with the Marriage Question, Religion, Art and all the rest of the catalogue. She came back from Russia absorbed in what the Soviet Union was doing about all these things. In many conversations during the last period of her life I have wondered, as I listened to Mrs. Webb enthusiastically defending every detail of Soviet policy, how this passionate admiration for the fruits of a comprehensive and bloody revolution squared with her contempt for those who cherished similar aspirations for this island. She seemed unable to face the question whether, if Lenin's was indeed the road to Utopia in Russia, Fabianism was adequate as an approach to Socialism elsewhere.

The theoretical speculations aroused by this last question are the underlying material of Mr. Braunthal's fascinating book. It is rare indeed to read so sincere, so thoughtful and so unpretentious an autobiography. Like Mrs. Webb, Braunthal is a Socialist. What disparate and opposite philosophies can be denoted by a single word! Mr. Braunthal came not from a well-to-do or Liberal home, but from a Viennese

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back-street from which he emerged, still a child, to earn his living in a factory and to educate himself as best he could by talk with fellow workers, by going to lectures and borrowing books, by learning to join in the furious Marxian controversies that dominated the lives of Austrian Socialists under the Hapsburgs. He gives a most instructive picture of this generation of Austrian Socialists, who argued and felt about Socialism as Puritans argued and felt about religion in 17th century England.

To-day in exile, Braunthal recalls his father's absorption in Jewish prophecy and his amused tolerance of his son's political interests; he describes the qualities and defects of the Viennese Socialist leaders, including the two Adlers, and his special hero, Otto Bauer. They believed—and it seemed reasonable then—that the international socialist movement would conquer, prevent the war and save the world. Disillusion came in 1914. Braunthal's book contains no better passage than his analysis of nationalism, illustrated by examples of the nonsense that still passes current in every nation about other nations. In the break-up of the Empire during the war, one at least of the old theoretical problems was solved. After 1918 it was no longer necessary to argue whether Socialism should be achieved for Austria-Hungary as a whole or whether it was desirable for Czechs and Hungarians and the rest first to win their national independance. Austria-Hungary split into fragments and the problem for an Austrian was to make any kind of a living. Braunthal, a soldier with no enthusiasm for the Empire whose uniform he wore, witnessed the naval mutiny at Cattaro that began the revolution; he heard of Friedrich Adler's sacrificial murder of the Austrian Premier while sitting at mess with a certain Captain Fey, who, in 1934, was to shoot down so many of Braunthal's comrades. After the war he worked, in great happiness, with the exceptionally able group of men who ran the *Arbeiter Zeitung*, a newspaper in which thoughtful comment was given more space than news, and he was at his post when Fascism came to Austria. First imprisoned by Dolfuss, he was finally exiled and came to Britain, hoping to warn us in time of the meaning of Hitler. He found most people indifferent; the upper-class immovably sure that Hitler would save the world from Bolshevism, and the intellectuals, who alone understood and appreciated the danger, conscious of their own impotence to do anything about it.

Mr. Braunthal's is, inevitably, a sad book, though it contains no word of self-pity. Its range of culture is as wide as its human sympathy is deep; its command of socialist theory is only possible for a writer who has spent most of his life among people to whom the coming revolution was the substance of life itself, the Millennium no jesting phrase, but a state of society which they could themselves begin to build, once the capitalist enemy was overthrown.

Who has been more mistaken—British Fabians, with their limited objectives and faith in gradualism for Britain, or Continental Marxists with their religious faith, their earnest striving for a doctrine so precisely stated that it would ensure correct action, and achieve world Socialism when the crisis came? The question is the beginning of a book, not the conclusion of a review. It is clear enough that Capitalism throughout the western world has proved stronger than either the Webbs thought when they sought to permeate it, or the Marxists when they hoped to smash it. And the central mistake was common to both. All Socialists have under-estimated the emotional hold of nationalism which still remains the most powerful force in the world. It is not enough to say that it has been exploited by the propaganda of Capitalism, true though that is. The tragedy is that it persists within the Socialist movement even when it is victorious. Is it stronger to-day in Britain, America, or the U.S.S.R.? I am always expecting to hear some leader of British thought declare that "we are all national Socialists now," and to find how few there are to contradict him. The Webbs and their followers—many in office in Britain to-day—have always been British Socialists; the few surviving international Socialists are mainly, like Julius Braunthal, in exile. KINGSLEY MARTIN

ROMANTICS AT RANDOM

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This latest of Romantic anthologies, anonymously edited, is a somewhat random collection of short stories—some of them well known—by Poe, Dickens, Villiers, Balzac, Sheridan le Fanu, Pushkin and Stevenson. The main interest of such a volume lies in the principle, the stricter the better at this late date, on which it is assembled, indicated here by a choice exemplar among Publisher's Notes.

> The Romantic Writers—that is to say in this context writers whose work is of the Romantic type [does this define lack of definition?] wer men perpetually afraid, perpetually disgusted, ye perpetually fascinated. . . . What disgusted ye fascinated them? In the most general sense lif itself [is this a prerogative of the "Romantics"? and all that lay hidden beneath the surface of i . . . the shadow of the shadow. . . They were al men who cried like Dr. Faustus:—
>
> "Ugly hell gape not! Come not Lucifer!" But unlike Faustus, they cried so because the wanted ugly hell to gape. . . .

In the face of such rhetoric and generalised biography, any attempt at redefinition is perhaps out of place. However, not even the simples distinction is made between writers who ask u to be interested in what they have made, and those who ask us to be interested in what they are. Certainly all the stories contain elements o Flaubert's "grande synthèse"—"je humais à l fois l'odeur des citronniers et celle des cadavres" —but it is difficult to see in some of the pieces such as Balzac's "The Oath" the persona thraldom of the Romantics to their heroes, o the *exacerbatio cerebri* of the Decadents, which moves the three stories by Poe ("King Pest," "The Case of Mr. Waldemar," and "The Blac Cat") and to less purpose "The Watcher," b le Fanu, which makes "Torture by Hope" b Villiers, newly translated for this volum by Josephine Plummer, a long nervous stroking of the brain, and which by a strange "toomuchness" of emotion gives Melville's magnificent story "Bartleby" its haunting quality. The fashionable "other side" of Dickens—one feel this volume is essentially fashionable—is represented by "The Signalman." The two storie by Pushkin have been translated by Doree Berry and I. Freiman. Though the romantically minded "in the most general sense," to borrow a phrase, might see in "The Pistol Shot" Pushkin's premonition of his own death, th story is unpsychological, anecdotal and derivatively classical in treatment; and "The Queen o Spades" despite its nervous intensity is restraine by the irony of a writer who had rebuked Byro for taking a one-sided view of human nature an the world and becoming immersed in himself and who by 1833 was far from being unduly concerned with the individual sensibility and th individual will. Lastly, "Thrawn Janet," Stevenson's best-known "bogle" story, and "A Lodging for the Night," though two of Stevenson's mos successful short stories, are hardly forged in th fire of a deeply tortured sensibility. It is highl unlikely that Stevenson cried "Come not Lucifer."

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However, if we are prepared to disregard the principle, if any, on which the book was assembled, it makes pleasant reading, and is valuable at the moment as the only way of obtaining many of the stories, notably those by Poe, Melville and Villiers. Lest the excitement of reading prove too great, the drawings by R. A. Brandt which "illustrate, in the widest sense," says the Publisher's Note, "the meaning of the tales—the flavour ('hollow and meagre, yet crisp') of the movement and attitude that engendered them," remind us by their curious woolliness and a certain emotional overstatement, that after all perhaps it is not the tiger we have seen, but only, although through a side-illuminated blanket, our own very domestic cat.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

CHRISTIAN SOCIOLOGY

Prospect for Christendom. Edit. MAURICE B. RECKITT. *Faber.* 12s. 6*d.*

This is a book on social reconstruction of peculiar importance. It is a planned exposition of the social philosophy of that section of the Anglican Church which combines a strict adherence to the Catholic tradition with a passionate effort for radical social reform. Of the fifteen contributors most are clergymen. The laymen of the group include T. S. Eliot, Philip Mairet and the late Ruth Kenyon. The intellectual level is high throughout. The plan is comprehensive and well integrated. The purpose is to expound the principles of social reconstruction which are involved in the Christian tradition.

The result is a clear exhibition both of the strength and the weakness of our religious tradition in face of contemporary problems. Any religious approach to these which is intelligent enough to see the need of a clear social theory, starts with an initial advantage. It sets the personal life of humanity in the centre of the picture, and so escapes the self-stultifying tendency to regard the functional aspect of social life as autonomous—as capable of furnishing an end for its own organised efficiency.

But the simple rightness of this starting-point is made all but nugatory by the dogmatic and traditional character of the theology which offers to interpret it. The interpretation of the personal life is indeed the function of theology. But a theology which finds its first principles in an authoritative revelation is committed to a pattern of personal life which is eternally right, and which must be independent of the changes in the functional ordering of human relations brought about by technological advances. In fact, the pattern of personal life cannot be isolated in this fashion from the functional pattern. Technological progress in civilisation modifies the pattern of personal life. It offers a continuous threat to the traditional pattern which, for the traditionalist, expresses the "eternal" values.

This is the crux of the conflict between science and religion. It explains the pessimism of these writers in face of a "civilisation of technics." They are right in stressing the need for a Christian sociology. They do not see that a dogmatic theology must frustrate their effort to supply one. Sociology is science. A "sociology" derived by deduction from such a theology can and should have no more standing than the recently defunct "Nazi physics." There is no possibility of relating the developing, experimental theory of science, which is the instrument of reconstruction, to a theory of Man which is "eternal," antiquarian, and received "by faith." It is indeed this impossibility of relation which compels the modern world to content itself with a civilisation of technics. It is debarred by the scholasticism of its theological tradition from discovering experimentally the new and richer patterns of personal life which the new technology makes possible. This incompatibility is reflected in the book, naturally enough. Its theological section is hardly comprehensible except by the initiate. The essays dealing with aspects of the functional life of society have no necessary logical connection with their theological "foundations." The connections are by emotional association. They might conceivably have been written by humanists of no religious allegiance, so far as their substance is concerned. It is true that they could not have been conceived outside the Christian tradition of the West; but neither could the teaching of Karl Marx.

Why may we not expect the functional progress of civilisation to open up the possibility of new and lovelier patterns of personal life? Why should these not be empirically discovered and tested experimentally? Why should we have to reject Christianity to do so? The notion of a true pattern laid up in Heaven is not Christian but Platonic. If Christianity tied us to any particular pattern of personal life, it would surely not be the pattern formed in Western Europe on the foundation of Medieval technology, but that of the old Jewish community to which Christ belonged. In fact, what Christianity provides is the dynamic principles of personal community. Their validity can be verified empirically. But these dictate no eternal pattern; they determine patterns of personal life only when combined with a particular set of technological possibilities.

Thus the task of the Christian reformer is a domestic task. He must transform the Western religious tradition. We need a Christian theology, weaned from its traditional dogmatism, which has learned from science not to stand firm on the delusive certitudes of ancient authority, but to walk by faith.

JOHN MACMURRAY

A VIEW OF VENICE

Venice — An Aspect of Art. By ADRIAN STOKES. *Faber.* 10s. 6*d.*

Someone ought to compile an anthology of impressions of Venice by travellers during the last 150 years. Each man sees a different aspect of this incomparably rich city: Byron its tawdry romance, Ruskin its medievalism, Henry James its melancholy, Corvo its squalor, Thomas Mann its suicidal misery. Mr. Adrian Stokes sees the organic relationship between disordered water and ordered geometrical buildings. He is writing of the early Renaissance architecture and sculpture of Venice; but if anyone hopes for factual information from his book, they will be disappointed. Readers of *The Quattro Cento* and *The Stones of Rimini* will know what they are letting themselves in for if they decide to tackle this new record of Mr. Stokes's visual experiences. He is not a great one for delving into libraries; he presents us with minimum of the facts, trends and influences that form the stock-in-trade of modern art historians. Instead he prefers to lie back in his gondola on the Grand Canal, allowing buildings of great historical significance to glide past him unheeded. Let them wait, he seems to be saying, until the light shall fall from another angle; meanwhile, his eye has been caught by some washing hanging from a nearby balcony, a striped gondola pole or a woman emerging from a dank courtyard, and one imagines him scribbling in a note-book some complicated mandarin phrase. He writes as the painter and the poet who finds in every aspect of the life of the city, whether it be the pigeons in the Piazza or the cry of a gondolier as he rounds the bend of the canal, an expression of its inimitable character. Those who retain nostalgic memories of Venice before

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1940 will respond to this evocative treatment of the subject, in spite of the sometimes tortured use of words. And there are moments of real inspiration, when he seems to perceive in some movement or play of light a vision of Venice that has escaped the writers of the past, as when he speaks of the "crinkled mouldings" on the ground level of Venetian buildings, or the fusion of "circular form and panelled rectangle" on so many façades of Renaissance palaces and churches, or when he describes Giorgione's "Tempest" as "dramatic in the want of tension." This last section on Giorgione is well worth reading, even though it appears that Mr. Stokes has not familiarised himself with the recent literature on the subject.

BENEDICT NICOLSON

SAINTS AND LEVELLERS

The Leveller Tracts (1647-1653). Edited by WILLIAM HALLER and GODFREY DAVIES. *Columbia University Press and Oxford University Press.* 44*s.*

While the treasures of the British Museum lay for safety in a Welsh mine, American universities have been giving some of them to the world. With more insight than our own classical historians American scholars have recognised the importance of the Levellers and to them we owe several recent collections of their pamphlets, including all Winstanley's works. This latest collection of their tracts contains some of the familiar documents which Prof. Woodhouse made available in his *Puritanism and Liberty,* but there are other things of the first importance which have never been reprinted. Above all, here are the chief pamphlets on both sides of the controversy that raged round the attractive but enigmatic personality of William Walwyn, who is for modern readers, after Winstanley, by far the most interesting writer of the Leveller movement. The publication of that shrewd, if scurrilous, attack on him, *Walwyn's Wiles,* marks, with his replies, a crucial phase in the history of the Puritan struggle.

Looking back upon this episode, with the advantage of our own recent experience, we can understand it perhaps more clearly than contemporaries did. The Levellers were democrats who stood for manhood suffrage and certain "fundamental liberties," while they sought to win popular support by a daring programme of social reform, which ranged from universal education to peasant ownership of the land. They were pioneers in political organisation, and were winning both the masses of London and the ranks of the New Model. Against this popular movement stood the "Saints," whose totalitarian tendencies we readily recognise to-day through the theological disguises of the period. They conceived themselves as an *élite,* called by God to govern in His name, if need be by the sword and the now familiar methods of a dictatorship.

If it was this consciousness of a divine mission that separated the Saints from the Levellers, the real underlying division between them was one of class. The "gentlemen Independents" attacked Walwyn partly because they saw in him a sceptic and a rationalist, addicted to Socratic questioning, but also because they suspected him of Communism. Neither of these charges was wholly true or wholly false. A tolerant, questioning rationalist he certainly was by temperament, and in his sympathies, if not in his practical politics, he did lean towards Communism. He even had the courage to defend the memory of those terrible "reds," the Anabaptists of Münster. The issue is as clear when he counter-attacks. A charitable man, who rarely stooped to personalities, he none the less draws for us a painfully significant picture of the Saints. He scourges the luxury of their dress and their homes. He lashes their clergy, whom he describes as "traders," chiefly concerned to defend their professional interests. Many of their leading elders were usurers. The Saints of the City formed, he tells us, a close "confederacy," grown by mutual trading to "a mighty interest," which he compares to the Jews of Amsterdam.

It is a great gain to have these documents at last in an accessible form, carefully edited and well printed. They make clear for us what Cromwell was doing when, after long negotiations, he finally broke with the Levellers and threw in his lot with the Saints. The choice lay between democracy with a generous social programme and the totalitarian pretensions of the elect, who were, in fact, a plutocratic oligarchy.

H. N. BRAILSFORD

Pilot Guide to Political London. E. C. R. HADFIELD and J. E. MACCOLL. *Pilot Press.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

This excellent successor to the *Pilot Guide* to the General Election is designed primarily for use in the coming municipal contests. But it is also a necessary book for anyone who takes any interest in the affairs of London. It is, in fact, a book that should have been written a long time ago, for it puts into simple language and easily digested statistics all the information about the government and social services of London which should be at any citizen's disposal. It summarises the method of election, the character of councils, the work of councillors, the finance of the council's activities and the general pattern of social and political activity all over London. A most useful appendix gives detailed statistics for each of the Metropolitan Boroughs. No municipal candidate can afford to be without this book.

Week-end Competitions

No. 821

Set by Roger Marvell

Swift died on October 19, 1745. Competitors are invited to invent comments from him in not more than 150 words upon the progress of humanity since his death. Entries by Oct. 30.

RESULTS OF COMPETITION No. 818

Set by Sam Smiles

"Is bad taste anything more than the offence which is caused to stale minds by fresh minds?" (St. John Ervine). The usual prizes are offered for a similar defence (in the form of a rhetorical question) of avarice, gluttony, rudeness, incest, nagging, boasting, snobbery, ostentation, tactlessness, or making bad blood.

Report by Sam Smiles

Competitors entered into the joke in great numbers and with great zest. By the time I had finished reading the entries, I realised what a strong case Mr. St. John Ervine could make for his view, since most, perhaps all, of the defects I mentioned can be considered forms of bad taste. I append a selection from the entries, and I recommend £1 each for R. J. P. Hewison, David Luke, Allan M. Laing and Prodd; 10*s.* each for J. R. Till, I. C. Saul, Geo. B. Duthie, D. L. Chesterton and Sir Robert Witt.

Is AVARICE anything more than a practical protest against a spendthrift world?

GLUTTONY—surely it is merely indiscretion in praising the Creator in his works?

What is NAGGING but the impact of necessary repetition on the wilfully inattentive?

Is BOASTING really anything worse than sharing with others your pleasure in yourself?

R. J. P. HEWISON

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Lecture Courses—continued

MINISTRY of Education. Refresher Cours for Teachers of Art. Ministry will hol in London, during week beginning Decembe 31st, course to enable teachers of art and craft who have qualified during war and were not during their training, able to see original work in great national collections, to make up fo lost opportunities, as well as to enable othe teachers who have not had advantage of seein national collections for some years to renew the acquaintance with them. Course will last fro Dec. 31st until Jan. 4th incl. All those selecte reqd. to stay during course at King's Colleg Hostel, Vincent Sq., Westminster, wher accom. provided at reasonable charge. Cours will be so organised that, while greater pa of time will be spent in planned visits to Nation Gallery, Victoria and Albert Museum and th Wallace Collection, there will also be opports. fo individuals to pursue special interests. It hoped, in addition, to arrange few lectures b leading authorities. Those who wish to atten should write for applic. form to Secretary (Sho Courses), Min. of Educ., 14–20 Lennox Gdns S.W.1. Applics. from those in employment Local Educ. Authority must be submitte through Authority. Last date for receivin applics., October 29th. Proposed to admit teachers to course. Men and women may apply

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THE Psychology, Physiology and Mechanic of Piano Technique. Owing to M Ching's illness these lectures will be postpon until November Further announcement w be made later. Lectures available in print form from Sec., James Ching Pianoforte Scho 21 Wigmore St., London, W.1.

What is RUDENESS but the reply we cannot think of?

Is INCEST not a reconciliation of natural enemies?

Is NAGGING anything more than the way the injured approach the irresponsible?

David Luke

When the word GLUTTONY is employed, is it not merely the voice of envy proceeding from the mouth of the dyspeptic?

Can anyone assert that the objection to SNOBBERY is any other than a failure to realise human inequalities?

What is NAGGING if it is not just the single-minded determination to stick to the point in the face of equally determined evasion?

Allan M. Laing

Gluttony.

But Mummy why then was Daddy so pleased when Billy only came in second in the quarter mile?

Nagging.

Nagging, old boy? Do you realise that some people actually pay for systems to improve their memories?

Tactlessness.

Why make a virtue of humbug? Prodd

Incest.

Why should the affections always be extended to *strangers?*

Snobbery.

Why should we look down on people who look up?

J. R. Till

What is TACTLESSNESS but the persevering practice of the principle that honesty is the best policy?

Is SNOBBERY anything more than the tribute properly paid by Quantity to Quality?

I. C. Saul

Is AVARICE not the squander-bug's name for thrift?

Is not NAGGING merely commendable perseverance in trying to cure another's faults?

Geo. B. Duthie

What is INCEST but family love at its most purposeful?

What is NAGGING but the unwearied zeal of the reformer triumphant over experience?

D. L. Chesterton

Nagging.

Should I not repeat what you have again forgotten?

Snobbery.

Why feel ashamed to admit publicly that the best people are good enough for us?

Sir Robert Witt

Can you deny that AVARICE is merely an honest exhibition by the few of the secret desires of the many?

G. R. Jones

Is, after all, the purpose of our saving campaigns anything else than to encourage AVARICE?

A. A. Kurlander

Is not GLUTTONY just the taunt of the full stomach to the empty one?

F/Lt. W. H. Vanstone

Should we not rather call GLUTTONY an ungrudging tribute to the bounty of God?

Dorothy Bowers

What is RUDENESS but the synonym of the Inarticulate for Repartee? Guy Innes

Is the accusation of RUDENESS anything more than the tribute paid by hypocrisy to honesty?

C. G. W. Whibley

Surely RUDENESS is only a way of showing that one has a greater respect for the truth than for persons?

Granville Garley

What is RUDENESS but a stern refusal to follow the line of least resistance? Mrs. E. Negus

Why, Sir, as to RUDENESS, is he not a poor soldier that never takes the offensive? Is not offence the best defence? A. R. Poole

Is not RUDENESS merely the word used by the dissembler to picture the manners of the open-minded? C. S. Cook

INCEST: Who does not wish the best mate for his daughter? Melitot

Is INCEST anything less praiseworthy than family love—carried to its logical conclusion?

L. V. Upward

Is it not through INCEST that we are descended from Adam? Peter Turner

Is not NAGGING—like genius—the capacity for taking infinite pains in the interest of others?

K. B. Koppel

Is not BOASTING simply a word invented by those who never performed an action worth recounting? C. F. Rathbone

Is not BOASTING a sign of a strong character—incapable of feeble self-disparagement?

N. P. Meadway

Is not BOASTING merely the courage to express that superiority which we all feel?

W. J. Halliday

BOASTING is simply an inspired attempt to reveal hitherto unrecognised merit, is it not?

Pantarei

Is not SNOBBERY the means by which the socially rising unwittingly confirm the status of the socially stagnant? J. Hurstfield

Is OSTENTATION anything more than the plucking of the light from under the bushel?

Stanley J. Sharpless

Is not OSTENTATION merely gentility's snigger at grandeur? Mrs. C. Rule

What is OSTENTATION but a brave attempt to put a bold face on things? G. J. Blundell

Is not OSTENTATION the one bright feature which redeems money-making from mere curmudgeonly acquisitiveness? A. Raybould

Surely OSTENTATION is merely the offence given by the open-handed to the parsimonious?

Sgt. E. R. Mansfield

What sort of consistency is this that imposes spit-and-polish to improve morale and classes OSTENTATION as a vice? Owen H. Waller

OSTENTATION: Surely only the frigid, the withered and the middle-class recoil from glorious displays of wealth, learning, rank or decoration?

Constance Sewell

Why admire the peacock displaying its tail and deride a man for OSTENTATION in spreading his?

H. S. Murray

Would there be such a thing as TACTLESSNESS if people were not so touchy? J. A. W.

Is not TACTLESSNESS merely honesty in a world more accustomed to hypocrisy?

E. F. C.

What is TACTLESSNESS but a single-minded regard for truth? Leslie Johnson

What is TACTLESSNESS but saying the right thing to the wrong person? Horace B. Samuel

What is TACTLESSNESS if not, as the word suggests, an aversion to touchiness?

S. A. Cooper

Is MAKING BAD BLOOD anything more than the virtue of dividing to conquer?

Maxwell Setton

How can the MAKING OF BAD BLOOD be objected to if it gives people the gift of seeing themselves as others see them? Stanley French

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